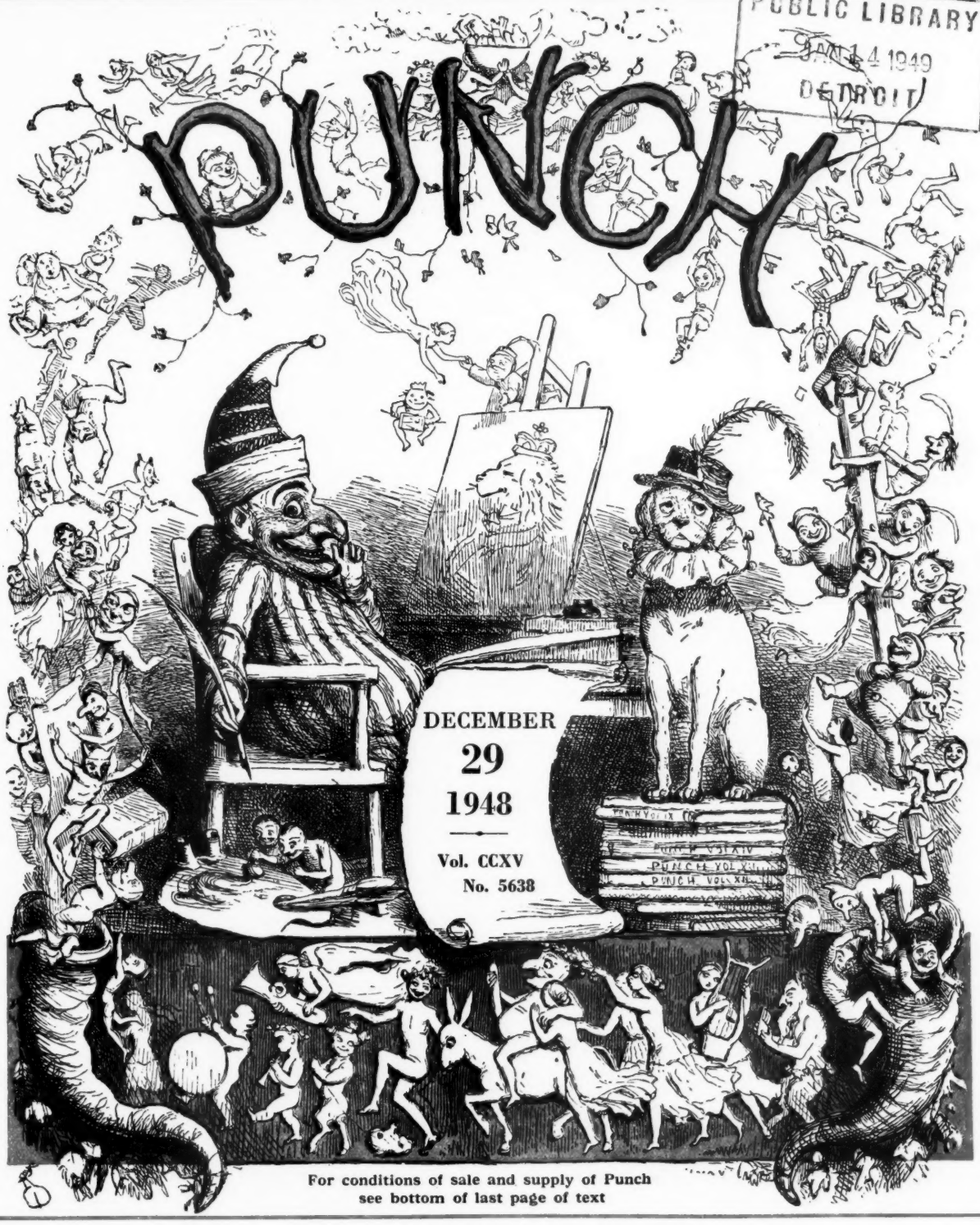
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PUNCH



DECEMBER
29
1948

Vol. CCXV
No. 5638

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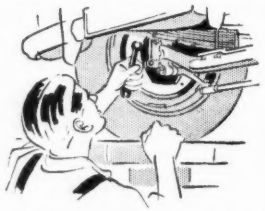
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Esso quality petrols are not yet available. Adjust your carburettor for maximum m.p.g. on present petrol.



Watch your dipstick—top up regularly. Drain and refill sump at recommended intervals. (Essolube of course)

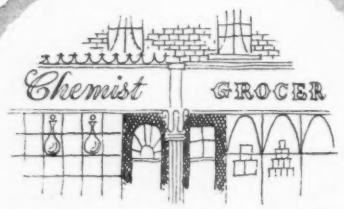


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... not yet everywhere, though there's a lot more Lembar about. Invalid Lembar with Glucose Content, for the ill and queasy, Beverage Lembar for the hale and canny. Made from lemon juice and barley, deliciously sweetened, Lembar has a soothing way with temperatures, inside or out.

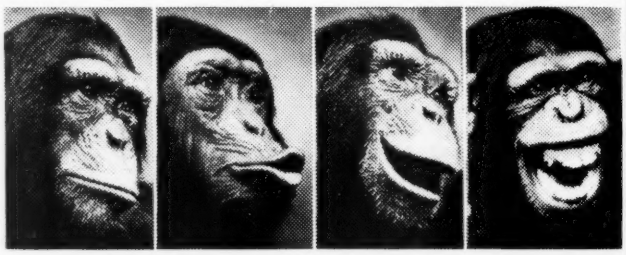
RAYNER'S

Lembar

Invalid Lembar from Chemists only. Beverage Lembar from Grocers and Wine Merchants.

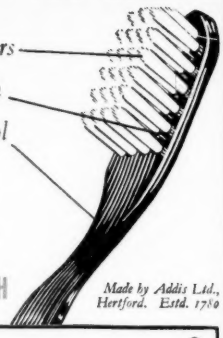
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WITH THE CORRECT-SHAPE* TOOTHBRUSH

★ *Straight-line head for the awkward corners*
★ *Widely-spaced tufts 'comb' between teeth*
★ *The angle in the handle gives easy control*



Wisdom REGD

THE CORRECT-SHAPE TOOTHBRUSH

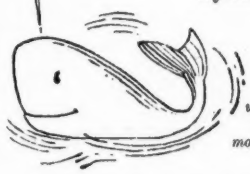
Made by Addis Ltd., Hertford. Estd. 1780

N.B. *Ask for Wisdom EXTRA — the extra-value brush with an extra row of tufts.*



YOU CAN GO WALKING (OR WHALING) WITH *Nylon*

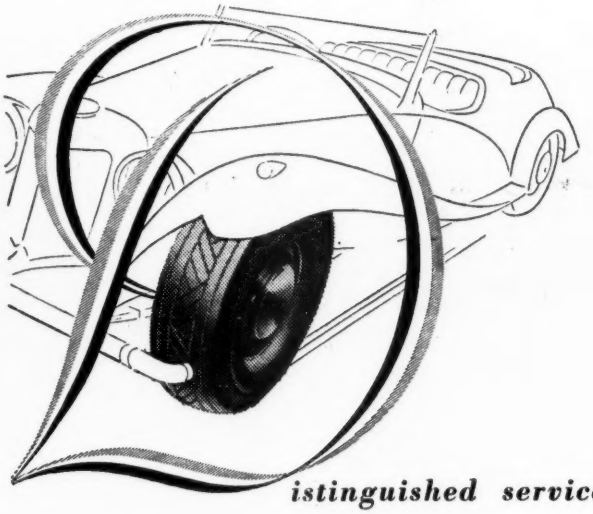
Sheer and strong for stockings, light and strong for whaling ropes — the properties of nylon yarns suit them to the most contradictory jobs. British nylon yarns supply industry at home with driving bands, canvas, filter cloths, upholstery, while British nylon stockings parade the export markets.



Nylon yarn IS strong, light, tough, hard wearing, flexible, elastic; WILL wash or clean easily; stay strong when wet; dry easily; WON'T rot; feed moths or other insects; burst into flame.

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The Hon. Robert Boyle

was the man who formulated the theory on which all chemical reasoning is based — namely, that an element is the simplest form of matter, and cannot be resolved into other substances. He first stated his theory in a treatise entitled "The Sceptical Chymist", published in 1661. Before that time, scientists had clung to Aristotle's hypothesis, dating back to the fourth century B.C., that the four "elements" were fire, water, earth and air, and that all matter consisted of these in different proportions. Boyle's appreciation of the true nature of an element changed the whole trend of scientific thought.

Son of the Earl of Cork, he was born at Lismore Castle, in Ireland, in 1627. At the age of eight, he was sent to school at Eton. Thence he proceeded to Oxford, and spent much of the rest of his life at the university carrying out scientific work which covered a vast field. Amongst his achievements were the invention of the first efficient air pump, the preparation of methyl alcohol from wood, and the propounding of Boyle's Law, which is still used to describe how the volume of a gas varies with pressure. Before Boyle's time, chemistry was the happy hunting ground of the quack physician and alchemist. His work at Oxford raised it to the status of a dignified branch of natural science. It is not without good reason, therefore, that Robert Boyle is regarded throughout the world as "the father of chemistry".

ICI

D.A.8



BEFORE ordering any Steam Trap..

ASK FOR ITS EXPECTATION OF LIFE

You read a lot about the importance of Steam Trapping, about fuel-savings of 10% and more, greater efficiency in steam supply . . . *but what about the efficiency of the traps themselves?* The effective life of a trap is a factor to be considered as well as the amount of fuel it will save *when it is new.* There is no point in saving 10% on fuel bills and paying it out later in servicing your traps.

Every Drayton-Armstrong Trap is guaranteed for two years against repairs or renewals. There are thousands functioning as good as new which have been in use for years.

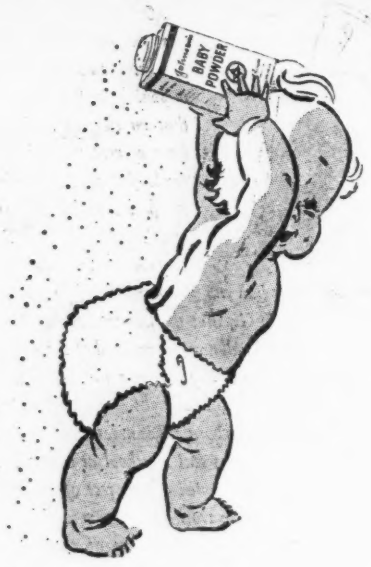
You may ask *why* we can give this unconditional guarantee with every Steam Trap. What is different about the Drayton-Armstrong? . . .

(1) The floating lever construction. This ensures snap action of the valve opening and closing, eliminates fulcrum pins with consequent wear, gives direct lift of valve to seat, prevents transmission of turbulence and "bucketing" to the seated valve and permits the hemispherical valve to find its seating.

(2) The high metal specification of all working parts, particularly the valve and seat, and the close machine limits set for standard production.

DRAYTON REGULATOR & INSTRUMENT CO. LTD., WEST DRAYTON, MIDDLESEX.

The kindest powder in the world



Johnson's BABY POWDER

JOHNSON & JOHNSON (GT. BRITAIN) LTD., SLOUGH AND GARGRAVE

A great help in BRONCHITIS



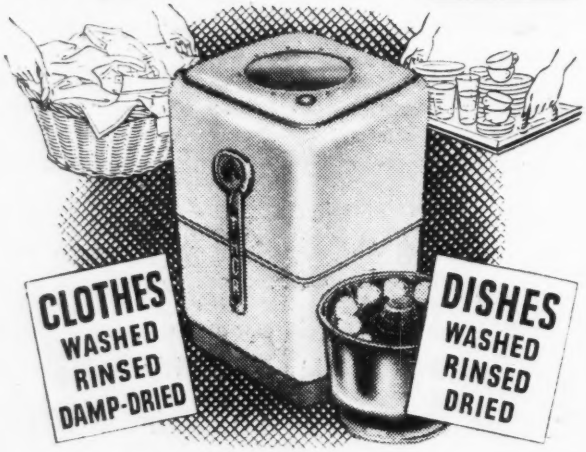
Angier's Emulsion is a blessing to sufferers from Bronchitis—particularly the very young and the elderly. This palatable Emulsion is so soothing. It brings such longed-for ease to the "tightness" and soreness. Even the most delicate stomachs can take it and, apart from easing the distressing symptoms, it has also a valuable tonic effect which hastens recovery and builds up resistance against future attacks.

EASE THE COUGHING AND INFLAMMATION WITH

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THOR WASHES BOTH



Imagine it! Without your hands touching water, the THOR washes clothes spotlessly clean, rinses them, then damp-dries them *better than wringer dry*. All by the flick of a switch! Washing-up to do? Just change the tubs—a matter of a minute or so. Put in the crockery and cutlery, switch on, and out it comes sparkling clean, dried and ready for use. The THOR is as quiet as a whisper, stands sink high (top 25" square), fits any kitchen, requires no fixing or special plumbing. Write now for illustrated leaflet.

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"Staybrite" Steel ★

"Staybrite" Steel is made only by

★ **FIRTH-VICKERS STAINLESS STEELS LTD., SHEFFIELD**
—who do not, however, manufacture any of the articles for which it is used.



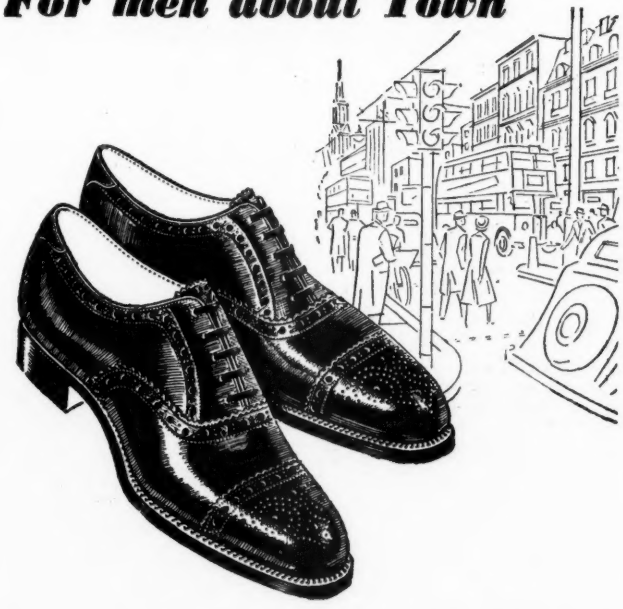
"Motoluxe" Coats are known the world over for their style, comfort and all round usefulness. Made in "Motoluxe" Alpaca Fabrics with wool check or plain linings. Now in better supply, but in case of difficulty, write to us for the address of your nearest agent. *"Motoluxe" Rugs again, too, but still in short supply.*

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1848 — Established 100 Years — 1948

For men about Town



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made by

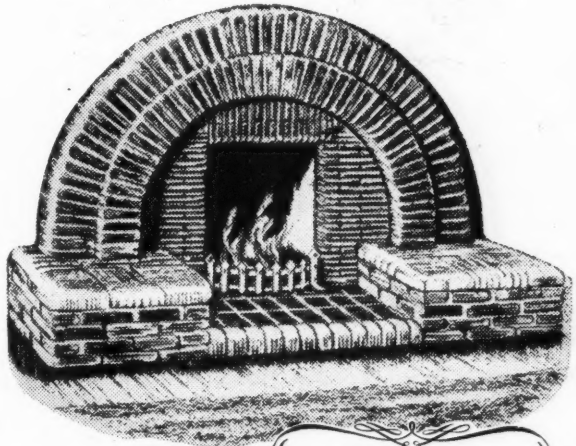
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Northampton

For Ladies' Shoes by CROCKETT & JONES LTD., *Northampton, ask for* 'SWAN' *brand*
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The beauty of Sussex Brick

Glowing embers captured in their rich and mellow tones . . . a spell is cast and fantasy is there. The enduring beauty of Sussex Brick Fireplaces is perfectly exemplified in our illustration of the B.33, one of many Finch creations exclusively designed and manufactured by the Finch Organization.



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SHOWROOMS AT
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SCOTTISH AGENT:
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THE Finch ORGANIZATION



Those were the days

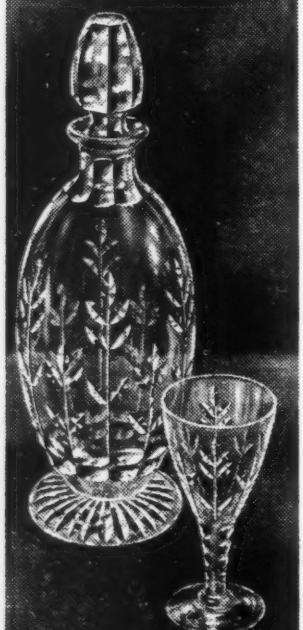


AND THIS WAS THEIR SHOE CREAM

PROPERT'S

Still unrivalled

Soon, we hope, this delicate decanter set will be available in England. But just now it is going overseas — like other Stuart Crystal — to help the nation's vital export drive.



Stuart Crystal

Why "Wiltshire" bacon?



Once upon a time a Master Harris of Devizes took to himself a butcher's shop in Calne in Wiltshire.

Now along that road there passed great droves of pigs going to Smithfield. Our good butcher bethought him that he would buy some of these pigs and apply to them his own method of curing.

Thus the Wiltshire cure was originated. Now there stands in Calne one of the greatest Bacon factories in the world.

Why cannot we have more?

Because we do not have the pigs. Yet our own pigs are the cheapest and quickest to grow, and do not use up dollars. Press all whom you know that food should be found for our own pigs. Here indeed is a matter of 'home security'—in both health and rations.

HARRIS

FAMOUS FOR BACON SINCE 1770

I'm worried about you, John



"You're sleeping badly, you're always tired and nervy, and you've no appetite. Can't you take a holiday?"

"*Wish I could, but it's quite impossible.*"

"Well then, will you do something else for me? I've got some Phyllosan tablets for you. Will you take them?"

"*If they'll help me to get my work done without feeling so worn out, certainly I will.*"

"So many people have said how good they are, I am sure you ought to try them. But you must promise me one thing."

"*What's that?*"

"That you'll take them regularly. I wrote to Phyllosan for one of their pocket tablet-containers ★ so that you can always have a few of the tablets with you wherever you are. So promise me you won't forget to take them."

★ *Anyone taking Phyllosan can get one of these pocket tablet-containers free by sending 2½d. stamp for postage to Natural Chemicals Ltd., (Dept. 23), St Helens, Lancs.*

You, too, should take

PHYLLOSAN

especially if you are over forty

Phyllosan tablets are obtainable from all chemists, 3/8, 6/-, and 22/4

Norseman

Harris Tweed

Overcoats

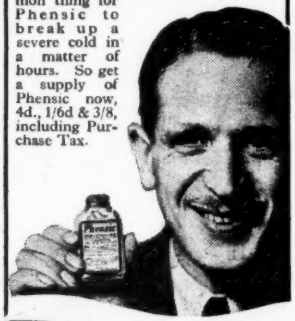
for discriminating people



Made by
A. B. HARGREAVES & Co., Ltd., Chorley, Lancs.
℗ HT

If you've caught a Cold

You can help yourself most effectively by taking Phensic—if you've caught a cold or chill. Because Phensic Tablets rapidly disintegrate they are promptly absorbed—thus the beneficial effect is felt very quickly. Symptoms such as a stuffy nose, running eyes, shivering, a heavy head are greatly relieved—and it is no uncommon thing for Phensic to break up a severe cold in a matter of hours. So get a supply of Phensic now, 4d., 1/6d & 3/8, including Purchase Tax.



Phensic

The grand tonic pain-relieving tablet!



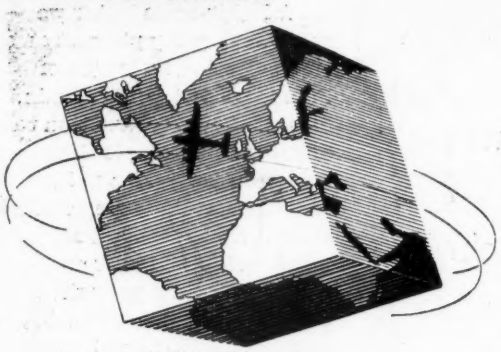
★ *158 firm but resilient plastic quills slide through even the deepest, heaviest locks—give gentle friction and tonic exercise to the hair-roots and the head.*

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STAVANGER RIO DE JANEIRO NAIROBI TEHRAN PRAGUE BRUSSELS ATHENS GOTHENBURG

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OF THE WORLD

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A sign of a stockist



This Miniature is displayed by most Coopers Y-Front stockists. Look for it in the best men's shop in your district—by doing so you can help to make certain of receiving a set —for what supplies there are go to him. Therefore, ask whenever you see this sign—you may be lucky first time!

Coopers Y-FRONT underwear



British Patent No. 479119

LYLE & SCOTT LTD., IDEAL HOUSE, ARGYLL ST., W.1. AND HAWICK, SCOTLAND

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A photostat of this letter will be sent on request to anyone in need of our service.



Let the RATIN SERVICE tackle *your* vermin problems with equal success—fill in the coupon below or 'phone Abbey 7621

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covers the country

THE BRITISH RATIN CO. LTD.

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We would like your local Surveyor to call and explain how the Ratin Service deals with rats, mice and insects.

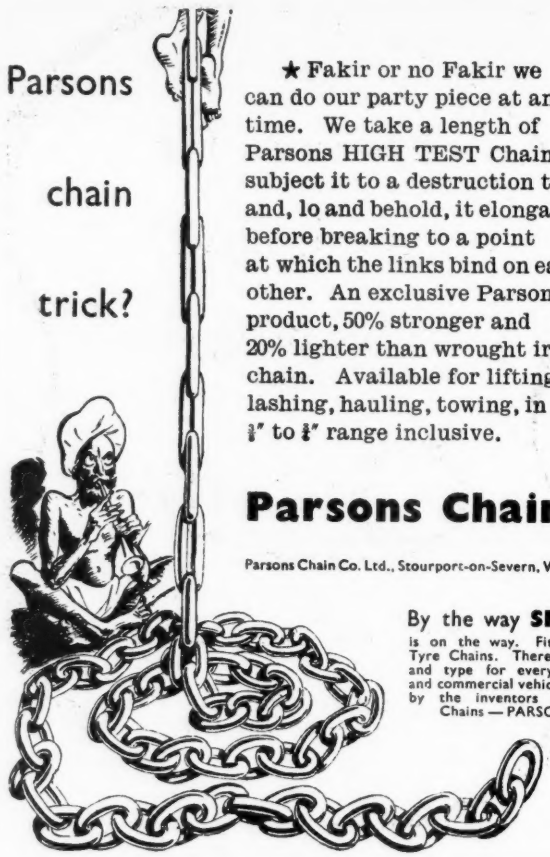
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ADDRESS .....

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P

Parsons chain trick?



★ Fakir or no Fakir we can do our party piece at any time. We take a length of Parsons HIGH TEST Chain, subject it to a destruction test and, lo and behold, it elongates before breaking to a point at which the links bind on each other. An exclusive Parsons product, 50% stronger and 20% lighter than wrought iron chain. Available for lifting, lashing, hauling, towing, in ⅜" to ⅝" range inclusive.

Parsons Chains

Parsons Chain Co. Ltd., Stourport-on-Severn, Worcs.

By the way **SNOW** is on the way. Fit Parsons Tyre Chains. There's a size and type for every private and commercial vehicle. Made by the inventors of Tyre Chains — PARSONS.



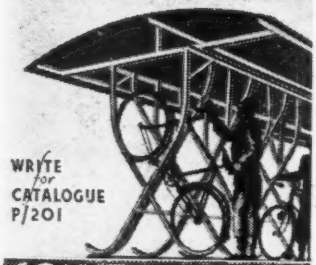
"LOOK AT THIS HORRID PIMPLE—

I could scream!"

A pimple can so often be a crowning disaster—but never for those who keep D.D.D. Prescription by them. A dab of this liquid healer makes pimples, spots and other skin blemishes vanish rapidly. 1/7d. a bottle, at chemists.

D.D.D. PRESCRIPTION

The SOLUTION OF THE CYCLE STORAGE PROBLEM



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Essential for
good, clear
lighting –

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the wonderful lamp

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Dear Sirs,
We always seem to be in difficulty with our filing and would welcome your advice..."

FILING SYSTEMS
DUPLICATORS
STEEL DESKS AND
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VISIBLE RECORDS
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The good name in **motor oil**

Simpson PICCADILLY



For keeping snug on cold winter days, there is nothing like one of these double-breasted Ulsters. Cut for comfort, with the casual good looks so characteristic of Simpson tailoring



Men's Overcoat Dept. 2nd Floor

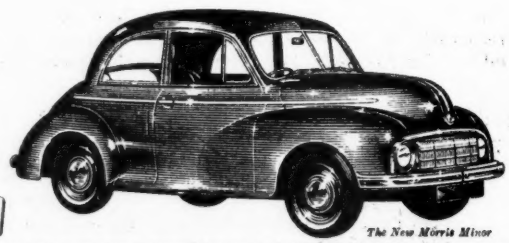
Simpson (Piccadilly) Ltd 202 Piccadilly London W.1 Regent 2002

The NEW MORRIS CARS answer demands of World Motorists



The New Morris Oxford

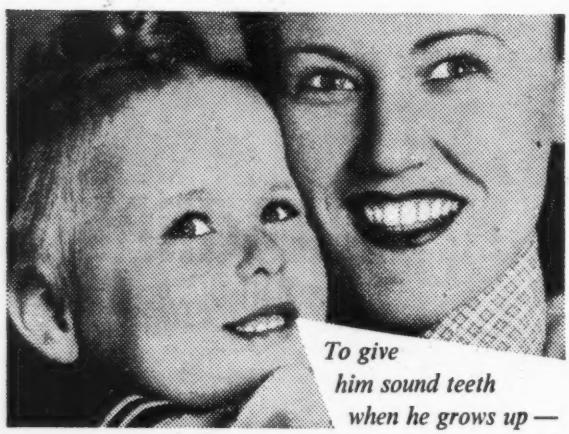
Revolutionary new models — Morris Oxford (13.5 h.p.), Morris Minor (8 h.p.), Morris Six (21 h.p.) — the finest cars Morris ever built. Luxury; economy; outstanding performance, and refinements such as independent front wheel springing, seating within wheelbase, exceptional luggage accommodation. Priority must be given to export



The New Morris Minor

Morris Motors Ltd., Cowley, Oxford. Overseas Business: Nuffield Exports Ltd., Oxford, & 41 Piccadilly, W.1

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To give him sound teeth when he grows up —

GUARD PRECIOUS WHITENESS *NOW!*

Irium frees teeth from acid-laden film that often causes decay

You can't begin too soon to keep your children's teeth gleaming white and free from film. Freedom from microbe-sheltering film that holds dangerous acids in contact with precious enamel, lessens the danger of decay, and helps to ensure good teeth for your children when they grow up. What is true for them is true for you.

ONLY Pepsodent contains Irium, which will gently and safely loosen, emulsify, and wash away dingy film and stains, leaving teeth brilliantly clean. *Children, and grown-ups too, should brush the teeth thoroughly with Pepsodent TWICE every day, see the dentist TWICE every year.*

Pepsodent TOOTHPASTE

CONTAINING EXCLUSIVE IRIUM

PD 122-923-55 **Standard size 1/4d. Double Family size 2/3d.**

Don't let THESE eyes . . .



become these . . .



Take care of your precious eyes in every possible way — by professional advice and glasses if need be, by resting them enough, by sensible habits and diet. And by the ready use of Optrex in regular eye hygiene and for all uncomplicated troubles of the eye, such as Styes, Conjunctivitis, Blepharitis, inflammations and colds in the eye — *and just plain tiredness!*

Optrex *the* **EYE LOTION**



PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXV No. 5638 December 29 1948

Charivaria

IT is suggested that pictures of Cabinet Ministers should be posted on the hoardings. This would give them an idea of how they would look with moustaches.

o o

A columnist mentions that, just before Christmas, he saw a well-known actor outside his front door searching high and low for the key. He might reasonably have mistaken him for a Wait.



o o

"A heart-shaped mirror hanging above a kidney-shaped dressing-table is also effective."
Australian paper.

And if you can find a liver-coloured carpet . . .

o o

A Chinese witness in a court case said he couldn't even read his own name on an envelope without his spectacles. It might just as well be written in English.

o o

"My grocer said he had run out of Camembert cheese, but I did not believe him," says a housewife. It would be an unkind thing to believe about anybody.

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"Piano Wanted: suitable learner; iron frame; reasonable."
Advt. in Hereford paper.

For the Little Daughter of the Harmonious Blacksmith?

o o

Bookmakers claim to have lost £40,000 at a recent race meeting. It is expected that the deficiency will soon be made up by public subscription.

"I have eaten elephant steak and it is very good," says a traveller. There seems to be a chance here for bulk-buying to come into its own.

o o

"Asked by Comdr. Noble (Cons., Chelsea) the reason for the decision that there was to be no further sales, Mr. S2x3§77 replied: For one reason, we have received no inquiries."—*Daily paper.*

Postman took them to the wrong man, perhaps.



o o

"I have tried everything, but the shrill squeaking of mice in the larder continues," complains a housewife. She might try waiting till their voices break.

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It was alleged in court that a boarding-house guest left by climbing down a water-pipe. This, the landlady explained, was quite a new departure.

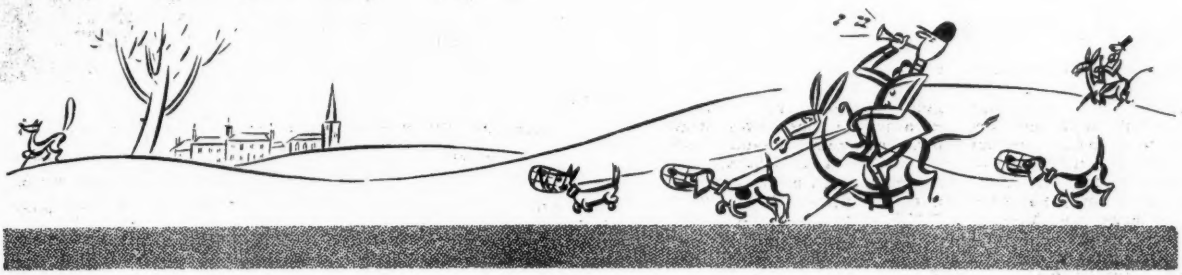
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"Mr. James G. Gardiner, the Canadian Minister of Agriculture, arrived in London this afternoon and will begin a series of discussions with Mr. Strachey to-morrow. He will also be speaking to officials who understand the technicalities of the world food market."
"Manchester Guardian."

Laugh that off, Mr. Strachey.

o o

It is stated that the opponents of hunting will accept no compromise. We understand they turned down a tentative suggestion by an M.F.H. that the fox should be given a longer start.



Clearing Things Up

WE shall never know now what happened on Wednesday the 6th in Central Lagos Street, nor what happened after Friday in Auckland. Or if we do ever find out it will only be at a long distance of time and with the kindly help of far-away subscribers or correspondents.

The old year closes. The New Year at the time of writing seems likely to come in. Yet these two mysteries of Nigeria and New Zealand remain for us dark as of yore. That is because we have kept the cuttings long in our notebook, taken them out from time to time, pondered awhile and put them away again. Now at the turn of the sun's wheel we propose to destroy them, but not before we have laid them in front of our readers so that their hearts may go out beyond this wave-girt Island of ours, and they may dream a little of the Empire, or perhaps I ought to say the Commonwealth, and what it means to us all.

> CENTRAL LAGOS ST. E.B. Errol FLYNN, Olivia De Havilland in "THEY DIED WITH THEIR BOOTS ON" 2/6 1/- 6d. TOMORROW: Humphrey BOGART in "SAHARA". Not much will be said in the way of advertising this Great Film. We do not want an occurrence of the ghastly incidents of Wednesday the 6th: Smashing down three gates, two doors and a whole staircase. All we could say is Sahara is a Film of Tremendous Impact, History making, High voltage tension, and great expectations.

The reticence, I am glad to say, was duly maintained. A further notice from the same cinema in the same paper runs as follows:

> CENTRAL LAGOS ST. E.B. Dick POWELL, Evelyn KEYES in "JOHNNY O'CLOCK" 2/6 1/- 6d. WEDNESDAY. Humphrey BOGART, Bruce BENNET in "SAHARA" Not one word will be said about this great film. This is to guard against charges of Breaking and Entry being preferred against hundreds of our clients. Incidents of Wednesday the 6th must not re-occur. If you crave excitement, suspense, and unequalled thrill—you must see Sahara. That is all.

All. But not enough for me. I am not a cynic, but I have a certain acquaintance with matters of propaganda and publicity. There may have been a terrible riot in Central Lagos Street on Wednesday, but is it not equally possible that nobody was going to see *Sahara* at all? Under each advertisement appears the notice:

> AFTER CINEMA
>
> FISH AND CHIPS at the IRISH HOUSE
> 17 Custom Street

—and these words, I think, as much as anything else, make us realize the unity and solidarity of the Empire as a whole.

In New Zealand we turn from amusement to business, from art to trade. My cutting does not come from a local paper, but from the *News Chronicle* over the way in Bouverie Street:

> Auckland, Friday.—The New Zealand Electrical Workers' Union have brought a suit against an Auckland firm for using non-union labour—to wit, one ferret, used to pull electric wiring through a pipe by putting a dead rabbit at the other end.—B.U.P.

Silence falls. I have no means of guessing how the suit ended. The firm may have had to pay damages. It may have been exculpated. There may have been a strike. The ferret may have been forced to join the union. We cannot tell.

But strange things have happened even here at home in 1948:

> PHANTOM BLAMED
> FOR CRASHES
>
> A PHANTOM horsewoman, dressed in a flowing white gown and a green-plumed hat, is being blamed by motorists for a series of strange accidents on the road between Worcester and Droitwich, where eight times in the past month cars have crashed for no apparent reason.
>
> A police spokesman at Droitwich said: "We have been informed of the experience of Mr. Lynch, but police drivers who have been out on the road have not, so far, reported any similar occurrence."

I have read innumerable papers eagerly since that cutting came to me, but so far as I know she has not been arrested yet. One can only say that it could hardly have happened at Coventry.

My last cutting, taken like the previous one from I know not where, begins like this:

> VICAR OF BIRDS—
> LISTS HIS PARISHIONERS
>
> The Vicar of Holy Trinity, Hove (Rev. E. E. J. Martin), writes in his church magazine: "I seem fated to be always ministering to birds. In Norwich (home of Canaries), I baptised, at one service, three babies named Gosling, Starling, and our own daughter—a Martin. Round the font were Miss Raven and Miss Crowe. A week later I married a policeman named Eagle to Miss Swann.

But I remember being present at two cocktail parties given by a Mrs. Twite, and a Mrs. Pintail, and being introduced to a Miss Brambling, a Mr. Scaup, two Miss Gadwalls, a Rev. Hobby, a man called Sanderling, a Major Godwit, and a Dr. Goosander all in the same afternoon. EVOE.

o o

The Jester

FOR fifty years and more he passed this way
And never passed without a nod and smile,
A word, a jest, the small-talk of the day;
So puerile.

He chose no friends, but took whoever came,
Nor sought to learn the secrets of the wise,
All men alike to him, each day the same;
No enterprise.

His talk was simple and his wit but slight,
No quick imagining, nor turn of grace,
Just borrowed phrases, unconsidered, trite;
So commonplace.

For fifty years and more he passed this way,
And never passed without a nod and smile,
Giving a cheerful greeting to the day;
So well worth while.



"TAXI!"



"Now who on earth could have sent me a cookery book?"

The Christmas Concert

"INFANTS always let you down," observed Miss Jackson bitterly. "If it isn't a fortnight lost for tonsils out it's loose front teeth. Can you help me, Miss Ash? I'm looking for an undersized eight-year-old to be the Mistletoe Elf."

Miss Ash pointed to an innocent cherub in an iron desk suspiciously close to hand. "His father is on the Parents' Committee. Had the cane yesterday for chalking bad words on the church wall."

"He'll do," said Miss Jackson enthusiastically. "It's personality that counts." She entered his name in her notebook.

"Eyes this way." Entering Class Four she stepped deftly over a row of calendars drying on the floor. "I want a nice handsome boy with a strong voice for King Winter. Nothing much to do. Rush on. Six lines of dialogue. Rush off. John Watkins, I believe your father is a carpenter. He might help us with the scenery. I'll put you down as Winter."

The nine-plus juniors were ankle deep in match-boxes and newspapers, carrying out the instructions in the syllabus: Presents will be made from waste materials. Inflammable ash-trays of papier mâché littered the window-ledges. Miniature chests of drawers adorned the cupboard tops.

"Have you any talent, Miss Pratt?"

Miss Pratt did not misunderstand the question.

"Harry Jordan's father is an electrician and Barbara Jones' mother is a dressmaker. Both on the Parents' Committee."

"Splendid. Which is Harry?"

"The one with the bandage on his hands. Mr. Scott has been taking them for lino-cutting. Steady with the paste powder, you boys at the back. Stand up, Harry."

Miss Jackson smiled her most enticing smile, usually reserved for inspectors and influential visitors.

"Come to me, dear, at playtime and I'll have your part typed out."

In came the Headmaster, carrying a pile of unmarked compositions. He tried to retreat, but was seized and held.

"I'm starting rehearsals on Monday," Miss Jackson told him firmly. "I must have every child, every day, at two o'clock, without any arguments or nastiness from the teachers. Otherwise I can't carry on."

Mr. Scott quailed. It was his first year as headmaster and he was unaccustomed to keeping a large female staff in order.

"I've already had some unpleasantness from Miss Riley," said Miss Jackson with passion. "The Christmas Tree fairies will have to learn their song straight after prayers, I said. What about Scripture? she said. We're in the middle of the Wise Men. Well, what about it? I said. If Mr. Scott wants to do a concert something will have to go."

"Exactly," said the Head soothingly. "By the way, I should like your advice about the Borough Library chairs. Do you think two gangways, or just one?"

On Monday the Big Hall was crowded with excited children scuffling and capering like spring lambs. Two

dozen non-performers, the residue of Miss Jackson's class, who were unable to be left in the classroom alone, were ostensibly looking at Silent Readers. The first rehearsal was about to commence. Mr. Scott sidled behind the folded-up dinner tables and watched proceedings with growing apprehension.

"I am Jack Frost," piped Jimmy with a gesture of self-introduction, finger-tips on solar plexus. "A merry sprite." He wagged a forefinger to indicate his merriness.

"And I, King Winter. Ho, ho, ho," mumbled John, stepping forward a second too late and giving three feeble circulations of the right arm.

"Come on, come on," shouted Miss Jackson. "Where's Jolly Jack Tar? Go on, boy. Hitch 'em up. Hitch 'em up. You are supposed to be acting. THAT's right! Get in the wrong place. My goodness! Only another three weeks before the concert. I shall never lick you into shape. You'll have to alter your ways, my lad, or your name will be crossed off my list."

"On Christmas Zeeve—Christmas Zeeve," stammered the Golliwog.

"If you don't know your part by next Monday, Halliburton, you're finished too. I've got to be ruthless."

She looked round impatiently for the Fairy Queen and King Winter. "Wait for each other and you'll *never* get on the stage. As soon as the Toys have marched round and bowed twice you begin your dance. No. No! Wait till they've BOWED! Ready, now. One, two and three, four. Front, back and turn, turn. Sleigh bells, sleigh bells? Where are the sleigh bells?"

Blushing, Miss Ash at the piano remembered her cue. The Dainty Doll tripped off Santa's sleigh, the school's star dancer miscast as a marionette.

"I can say Mamma," she remarked diffidently.

"Not Mamma," said Miss Jackson, in patient weariness. "You aren't a child talking. You are a doll. Try again. Short and jerky. Mam-ma. You know how a doll speaks."

"I can say Mar-mar," said Betty obediently.

"Well, get on. We can't waste time. Snowflakes—ready for your entrance?" Stiffly, but gamely, with legs apart, she paced out the movements. The Headmaster blenched at the shortness of her skirts. Stiffly, with frowns of anxious concentration, the Snowflakes imitated her gestures, small posteriors stuck out, arms upraised. Overcome, the Headmaster retired to his study.

In the next few weeks his telephone kept up a ceaseless ringing. Each time he picked up the receiver he knew what to expect. Icy, irate or ingratiating, the parents' requests were identical. They wished to learn the precise reason why their offspring had been passed over in favour of others older, younger, less beautiful and less talented.

A week before the performance three of the Moonbeams fell victims to whooping cough and were replaced by spares drawn from the unseen choir who were to sing off-stage, cramped behind the back-drop. The latter had attended all rehearsals and could understudy any part. One of the Christmas Tree fairies blacked her eye, larking about round the cloakroom pegs. The grandfather of the Mistletoe Elf passed away and the Elf was whisked up north by his mother. His part was deleted from the play. The pianist warded off nervous gastritis with difficulty, and even the hale and hearty Miss Jackson was seen clutching her throat, complaining that her pipes ached.

Never again, vowed the Headmaster, would he climb step-ladders at midnight adjusting spot-lights. Never again would he blister his thumbs cutting up string to tie numbered cards on the Borough Library seats. Never again would he allow himself to become involved in the private feuds and complexities of casting. Christmas was a bad time for a concert. There were the quarterly totals to calculate, examination papers to set and mark, there was the School Party, always a nightmare to the staff, and he dare not even think of the dangerous cross-currents through which he would have to steer his course at the Parent–Teachers' Annual Social.

By the opening night he was in a sad state of mental confusion. Sunk in gloom, he crouched on the front row between his wife in an unsmart hat and the Chairman of the Managers in a stiff collar and watch-chain, wondering which of the hundred possible catastrophes would occur.

The lights dimmed. The curtains parted, stuck, and were grasped by an anonymous hand. On tripped the Snowflakes, their crêpe paper cloaks a little dingy behind the footlights.

"Hang your littul stockings ZUP ton-i-ight," they chorused, augmented by the unseen choir. A Snowflake hat fell off and was adjusted by a Holly fairy. A ripple of sympathy swept through the audience and Mr. Scott relaxed.

The parents knew every song by heart, having listened to their children's speeches until they too were word-perfect. When the Golliwog broke down in the stocking-filling sequence a hundred fathers could have prompted him. When the Fairy on the Christmas Tree lisped out the hit number of the evening, the lips of a hundred mothers moved in unison.

There came, as there always does, the supreme moment.

"We're two little sparrows, so hungry and thin," chanted a pair of plaintive infants in brown siren-suits.

"No fresh green shoots so young and sweet
Are there about for RUS to weet."

The audience melted with tenderness. To his dismay, the Headmaster felt his spectacles misting over. No doubt about it. Birds in the winter certainly had a poor time of it.

"Tweet, tweet, *tweet*!" sang the sparrows, screwing up their eyes in anguish. "We've nothing a-TALL to weet."

It may have been the sparkle on the moonbeams' Cellophane wings. It may have been the limpid eyes of the Fairy Queen, turned upwards according to instructions. It may have been the emphatic rhythm thudded out on the piano that took the Head back to his own schooldays and the dreams and unfulfilled hopes of childhood. Whatever the cause, he was obliged to excuse himself at the first interval to answer an imaginary telephone-call.

By ten o'clock it was all over, the players shouting and singing in Class Two dressing-room, losing socks, hurling slippers, hiding scarves, fighting, having a glorious fling on hallowed premises under the protection of parents. Pastel dust flew in rainbow clouds from seasonable drawings pinned to the walls. A large print of the Shepherds of Bethlehem was damaged beyond repair.

As the Headmaster shook hands and received congratulations he was incoherent with love and pride. In the whole county there was no school to equal his, no staff so loyal, no pupils so gifted. Next year the concert would run for three nights, possibly for a week. He would increase the charges and raise money for an epidiascope. A Nativity play? Better not. A Pageant of the Seasons? Or perhaps an Operetta? He smiled with joyous anticipation. He knew that he could count on the stalwart support of Miss Jackson and the faithful co-operation of the parents.

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The Sighs of Bridge

LAST night at bridge I used a brand-new system
Of which my knowledge is not yet extensive.
With it I bid four slams; each time I missed 'em.
An interesting evening but expensive. M. H.

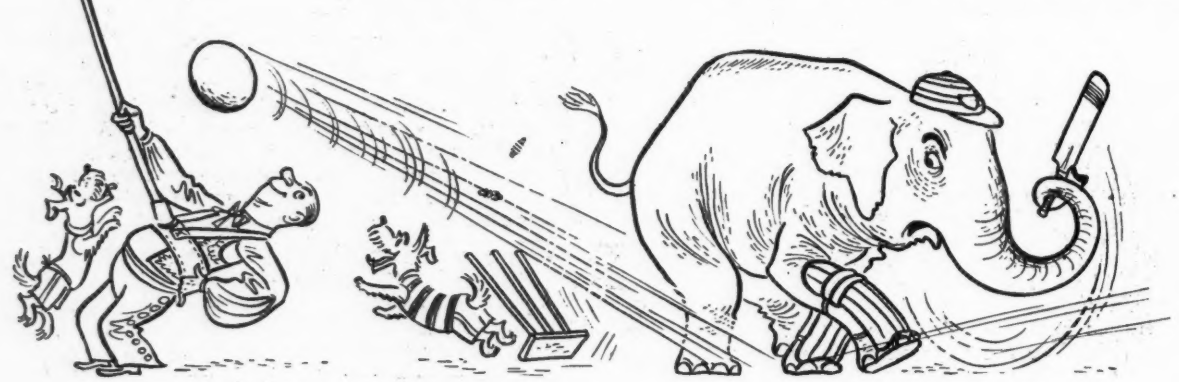
REPORT FROM OLYMPIA

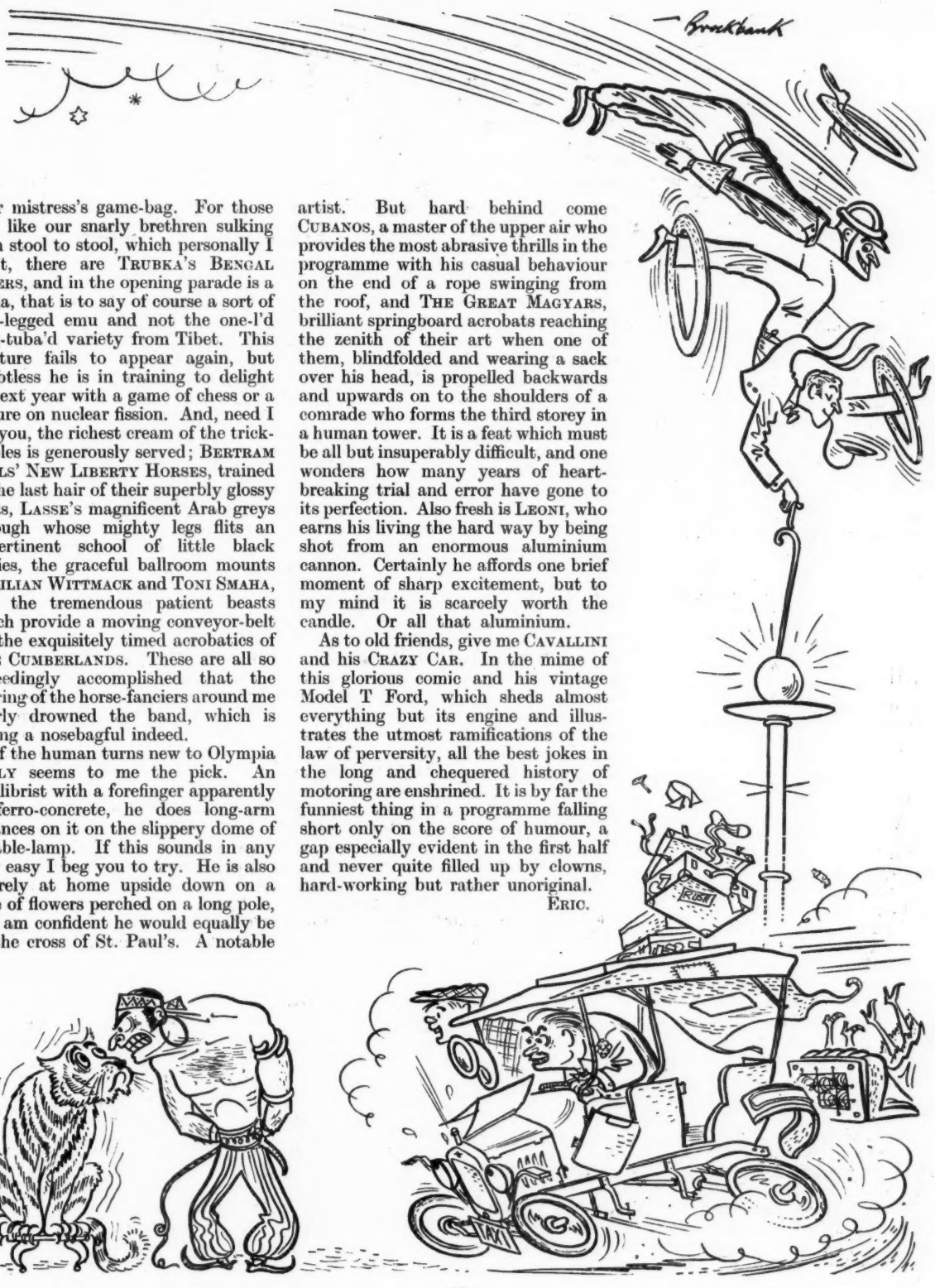


ONE of the arguments on which the human race, or at any rate the British section of it, bases its bold claim to be superior to the animals is that the latter are less good at games. I have always suspected that this deficiency sprang simply from a not altogether accidental lack of opportunity, and those of you lucky enough to have obtained a ticket for BERTRAM MILLS' CIRCUS will find ample proof that I was right. Take JOHN GINDL'S ELEPHANTS, for instance. They are not mentioned in *Wisden*, added to which they are mere girls, yet they bring into the arena ton after ton of the finest traditions of cricket. Their pads and caps and a pleasing absence of braces are a warning of serious intention, and the first ball—the large soft kind is used that some of us are tired of urging should be given a fair trial at Lord's—bears it out. This is a slow undertusk yorker on the leg, and the batsman, if I may so term her for convenience, swings skilfully across the crease like part of the Forth Bridge and gives it the willow decisively. Having done so, she holds up the game with quiet authority while she trundles out to pat down one of the daisies which carpet Olympia at this time of year; and soon afterwards a fizzer takes her middle stump and leaves her just another trunk victim. First-class cricket, without a doubt.

Or take STEPHENSON'S DOGS, whose entrancing demonstration of football, or rather of nose-balloon, was to me the highlight of the whole circus. Drawn presumably from Barking United, most of the players are woolly terriers who jump so prodigiously that the best of the game goes on at four or five feet above the ground. It is fast, extraordinarily accurate and frequently carried on among the ringside seats far behind the goal and every now and then a sharper nose than the rest brings a shattering explosion. My only regret was that Lord Burghley, who presented bouquets after each turn at the opening performance, had no complimentary bones in his pockets for the rival captains.

Continuing to put the animals first, which is the least one can do at a circus, you will not be disappointed in KNIE'S CHIMPANZEES, a crew of insubordinate mariners who begin with the tea-party hallowed of their race and later operate the very devil of a dance-band. They are nice fellows, and as they sit on their chairs clapping the feats of their friends you may, as I did, get an uncomfortable sensation of looking into a mirror. Then there is BIJOU, an appallingly dental mule who very sensibly declines to be ridden, and there are WOOLFORD'S AMAZING PIGEONS, who, when shot, act as their own retriever by doing slow-rolls into



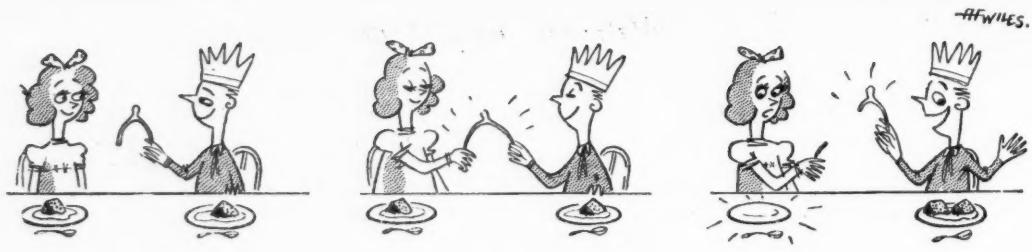


their mistress's game-bag. For those who like our snarly brethren sulking from stool to stool, which personally I don't, there are TRUBKA'S BENGAL TIGERS, and in the opening parade is a llama, that is to say of course a sort of four-legged emu and not the one-l'd long-tuba'd variety from Tibet. This creature fails to appear again, but doubtless he is in training to delight us next year with a game of chess or a lecture on nuclear fission. And, need I tell you, the richest cream of the trick-stables is generously served; BERTRAM MILLS' NEW LIBERTY HORSES, trained to the last hair of their superbly glossy coats, LASSE'S magnificent Arab greys through whose mighty legs flits an impertinent school of little black ponies, the graceful ballroom mounts of LILIAN WITTMACK and TONI SMAHA, and the tremendous patient beasts which provide a moving conveyor-belt for the exquisitely timed acrobatics of THE CUMBERLANDS. These are all so exceedingly accomplished that the purring of the horse-fanciers around me nearly drowned the band, which is saying a nosebagful indeed.

Of the human turns new to Olympia JOLLY seems to me the pick. An equilibrist with a forefinger apparently of ferro-concrete, he does long-arm balances on it on the slippery dome of a table-lamp. If this sounds in any way easy I beg you to try. He is also entirely at home upside down on a vase of flowers perched on a long pole, as I am confident he would equally be on the cross of St. Paul's. A notable artist. But hard behind come CUBANOS, a master of the upper air who provides the most abrasive thrills in the programme with his casual behaviour on the end of a rope swinging from the roof, and THE GREAT MAGYARS, brilliant springboard acrobats reaching the zenith of their art when one of them, blindfolded and wearing a sack over his head, is propelled backwards and upwards on to the shoulders of a comrade who forms the third storey in a human tower. It is a feat which must be all but insuperably difficult, and one wonders how many years of heart-breaking trial and error have gone to its perfection. Also fresh is LEONI, who earns his living the hard way by being shot from an enormous aluminium cannon. Certainly he affords one brief moment of sharp excitement, but to my mind it is scarcely worth the candle. Or all that aluminium.

As to old friends, give me CAVALLINI and his CRAZY CAR. In the mime of this glorious comic and his vintage Model T Ford, which sheds almost everything but its engine and illustrates the utmost ramifications of the law of perversity, all the best jokes in the long and chequered history of motoring are enshrined. It is by far the funniest thing in a programme falling short only on the score of humour, a gap especially evident in the first half and never quite filled up by clowns, hard-working but rather unoriginal.

ERIC.



Christmas Crumbs But Once a Year
(and Many of Them)

THE scene is the familiar study, lit by the solitary desk-lamp . . . Sorry, wrong show. It may be that that fits my present situation—though I'm not telling, mind you—but at the moment I don't wish to take any such limited view. I propose to range wide: I am seized with the idea of using for this stupendous article (Two Days in the Making—at a Cost of Thirty-seven and six-pence! Flash! Smash! Boom! Never Before on This Page! Bang! *"A" Trailer, advertising a "U" article*) all the resources of modern audience-communication. Never let it be said that this is a utility article, prepared in complete conformity with the authorized economy standards and containing only jokes used not less than once before, laboriously salvaged from my articles over the last fifteen years.

What it is about I am not at the moment quite sure—I hope to have some idea when it is finished, but I can't help wondering whether you will—but perhaps it may open gently, unobtrusively, with the voice of an Announcer.

ANNOUNCER. Ladies and gentlemen: Did it ever strike you to consider the irrelevance, the utter irrelevance, of the acrobat's smile?

The thought-provoking question insinuates itself into the quiet room and falls as flat as a paving-stone, nobody being present. This is where we switch to film technique. From a close-up of the loud-speaker (it needs dusting) the camera retreats till we can see much of the room. The loose covers of the arm-chairs are crumpled, papers lie about, ash-trays are full, the open hearth is scattered with cinders and half-burned coals, on a small table a volume of an encyclopædia lies open at Nasir-ed-Deen-Mohammed-Ibn-Hassan, dog hairs diversify the rug, a bust of Dante lies smashed to molecules just inside the door. The place looks lived-in.

The telephone rings. It is outside in the hall, and now comes rather a good moving shot of the feet of the man approaching to answer it. Clump, clump, clump, there they are—can this be anybody but a butler?—striped trousers, polished boots, solid presence (we can see a bit above the knees), and—yes—unctuous voice. The camera takes in a bit more; we can see his face now, and he looks astonishingly like the late Sydney Howard. We almost expect him to say "What's to do?" but what he says is—

BUTLER. Lord Zootle's residence. Lord Zootle's butler speaking.

Obviously a keen and conscientious reader of the telephone-directory, careful of the pennies of coin-in-the-slot callers who are wondering whether or not to press Button A.

I think we might have a little fiction-technique now. Stretched (Take that cinema-organ away, I tell you we're in a *novel*) on the great bed wherein none of his ancestors had been born, for it had been acquired in the Tottenham Court Road in 1937, the fifteenth Earl of Zootle lay, given up to bitter thoughts. Hard-riding, hard-hitting, hard-drinking, hard-boiled, the type of the true Empire-builder, he had been hard-hit by the withdrawal from India, where he had spent many years in Secunderabad or hard by. Fully dressed he lay, chewing his moustache. He was speechless with raj. Bless me, that's enough of that.

But if we turn on the radio again, what do we get? We get Mr. J. C. Metaphor, managing director of a firm in the North of England, who quadrupled production by introducing the very simple device of something or other. That's right, isn't it, Mr. Metaphor? Yes, that's quite right. In vertical gas and oil engines lubricated by the splash system there's only one thing to do, and I told my lads so. I took in the situation at a glance. Lads, I said——

ANNOUNCER. Ladies and gentlemen—Bingo! (*Tum, tum, tiddle-te-tum-tum-TUM !*)

A chorus begins to sing some laughable ditty, so let us pass at once to the fact that fifty-three years ago on the day I type these words, W. S. Gilbert was sued by a lady journalist for declining to be interviewed. The jury immediately returned a verdict for the defendant. To-day, of course, people frequently sue journalists for declining to interview them; or at least they would if they dared, and I wish they did.

"I put it to you that you are not a character worthy of being interviewed."

"Nothing of the sort."

"Do you mean," interposes the judge kindly, "that you bear no resemblance to the sort of character worthy of being interviewed?"

"No, my lord. I mean I have unrivalled qualifications."

"Indeed! Will you tell the court what they are?"

Witness can hardly believe his ears. Then he takes a deep breath and begins: "Well, now, to begin nowhere near the beginning, I was the inventor of the electrically-warmed salt-cellar for use in damp weather."

At this the court adjourns, and so do we, pausing only to ask one question: *Who would have thought that the Post Office's post-early propaganda would succeed in educating the public to such a pitch of efficiency that one gets no letters at all on Christmas Day?*

R. M.

o o

The Admission

"WE have our faults," I heard at evening say
A long black slug that crawled beside the hay
On a mown strip: "and yet this level green,
Great world, to whose horizon none has been,
Whose boundary or purpose none can know,
This world and all the things that on it grow,
Are for the slug, as all confess who pass
Their days in the great forest of the grass." D.

William and Dan

AMONG the debris of the years
(Said William to his mate)
One seatheless monument appears,
Rocked not by sighs nor worn by tears
Nor crumbled by the frost of fears,
But in a pristine state.

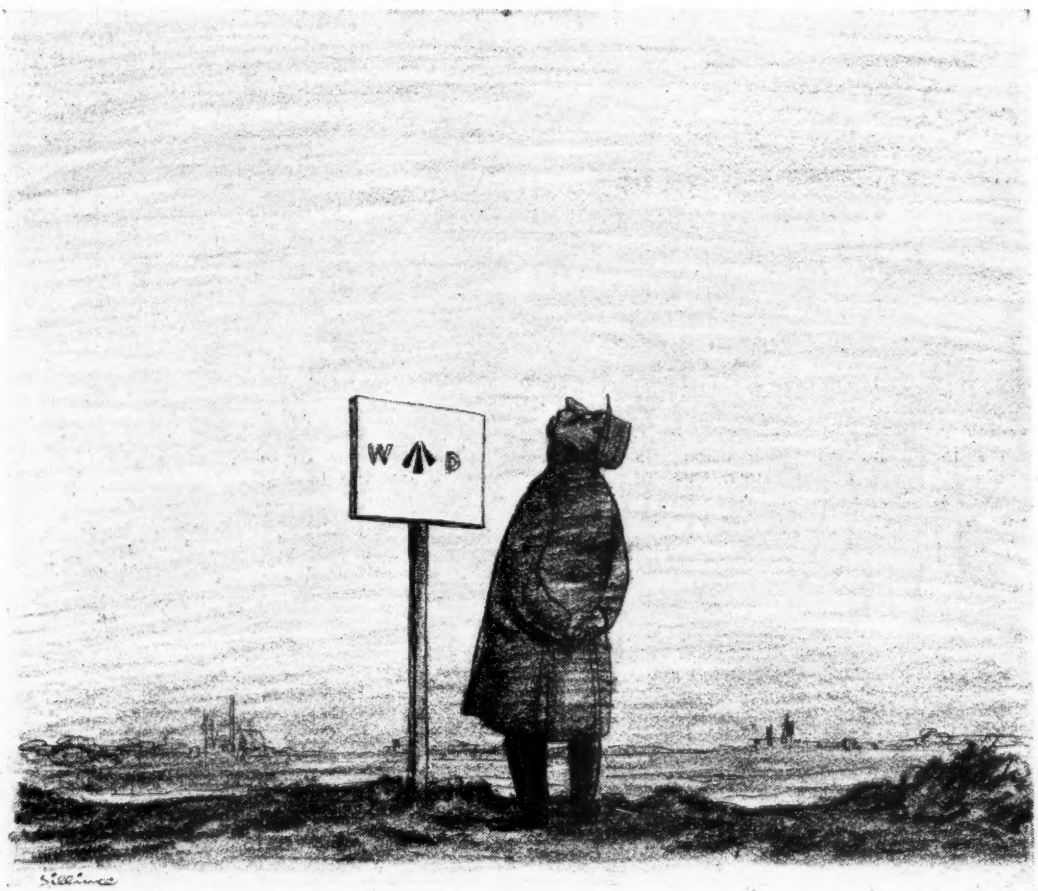
And what's this monument, dear friend
(Says Dan to brother Bill),
That stays unsmirched until the end,
That does not break nor even bend,
That does not shrink nor yet distend,
That stands so wondrous still?

Is it (he cried in accents wild,
His eyes as bright as glass)—
Is it Affection, pure and mild?
Or is it not (and here he smiled)
The love of mother for her child,
That bides and does not pass?

Is it Good Faith of which you speak,
For that indeed lasts long?
Or Honour, that is carved in teak,
Right Thinking, that is high and bleak,
Or Charity, that shields the weak
And justifies the strong?

Not so indeed, good brother Dan
(Said William to his mate);
This marvel is (and he began
To tremble weakly like a fan)
The Folly in the heart of man
That is inviolate.

At last, cried Dan, I understand!
How true is all you say!
And so they rose and, hand in hand,
They danced adown the darkling Strand
A melancholy saraband
Until the break of day.



Getting On

I LIKE reading biographies and autobiographies of men who have got on, because getting on is a thing I have always wanted to do, and occasionally they drop hints as to how they did it. One such hint I stumbled across the other day was in the life-story of a man in my own line of business, whose books are always sold out before they are published and usually before they are written. He said that the great thing was always to keep a tidy desk. A tidy desk, he said, meant a tidy mind.

So I decided, as a preliminary to getting on, to tidy my own desk, which is a huge affair with eighteen drawers (two of them secret). The most important drawer, because it is the biggest, is the one that hits you in the stomach when you are sitting at the desk and pull it out suddenly. When people of distinction call to see me and I want to impress them with how tidy I am I remove all the papers and bric-à-brac from the top of the desk and put them in this long drawer. When ordinary people call and I want to delude them into believing that my time is precious I take a few hundred papers out of this drawer and scatter them over the desk to show how busy I am.

All the other drawers are used for filing, which means hiding out of sight papers that you know you will never want to see again unless you throw them away, in which case they will be needed immediately. Only by filing them can you be absolutely certain that they will never be required any more. Each of the filing drawers would take several hours to tidy properly, and I suppose they will all have to be done if I am to get on, but it seemed to me to be my clear duty first to tackle the vital stomach-hitting drawer.

So I spent a whole morning going through its contents. I began by sorting them roughly into twelve categories, which I put in twelve piles on the carpet. Then I tackled them pile by pile, and the first pile I dealt with consisted of eighteen small lumps of sealing-wax of different colours. With our import-export position so precarious it would clearly be nothing short of criminal to throw any of it away, but as it was clearly untidy to have eighteen separate pieces cluttering up the drawer I put them all in a saucepan and put it on the gas-stove to boil them down into one large lump.

Next I tackled the pile containing seventy-three ends of pencils. They were all too short to hold comfortably but too long to jettison, so I joined them together with sealing-wax to make nineteen long if somewhat angular pencils, and did them up in bundles and put them back in the drawer.

Then I started on the papers, and the first pile I tackled consisted of unfinished poems. I always feel the urge to write a poem when I come in from the Cow and Cucumber at 10.5 sharp each night, and the first five or six lines are usually superb, but after that there is a falling-off and the next dozen lines are so bad that I shelve the poem until the next night and then start a new one. What I admire about Tennyson and Kipling and that lot is not that they could write poetry, which anybody can do, but that they could do such long stretches of it without breaking down. Perhaps the beer was stronger in their day.

I made the poems up into a parcel and put them back in the drawer and then started on the newspaper-cuttings, which I would have stuck in a book if I had one, and if the liquid glue in all nine tubes had not gone hard. So I put the nine tubes of liquid-glue in an old frying-pan and put it on the gas-stove and went out to buy a book in which to stick the cuttings.

When I returned an hour later, having met Sympson and had a quick one with him, which is always fatal, I found a crowd round the house and a fire-engine and the usual accessories. The chief fireman thought the glue had caused it, but I favoured the sealing-wax. Unfortunately the damage was slight and confined to the kitchen, and the hideous piles of papers all over the carpet in my study were unconsumed. So I put them back in the stomach-hitting drawer, wishing that people who have got on would not write books giving absolutely useless hints about how they did it.

D. H. B.



"Are YOU *the maitre d'hôtel that this is à la?"*

You Can't Fool Us!

YOU playwrights may not be aware of it, but from the moment when the curtain goes up you are fighting a losing battle. Audiences *notice* things. You think we don't know your little games, but, believe me, we'll find you out.

Take the theatrical boarding-house scene, where the variety couple (big-hearted Jim and blonde Clara) sit on a double bed, with the act folded up and a trunk full of memories. As they share their last bottle of stout like real troupers, in comes the slatternly landlady with a demand for the rent and a telegram from C. B. Cochran, or Sam Goldwyn, or somebody. The mood changes like a shot. All is hustle and bustle. Big-hearted Jim shaves, Clara trims his cuffs and polishes his last pair of shoes. It is their big chance, or something. They kiss each other, the landlady, their lucky charms, and anything else they can lay hands on. And off goes Jim, with a cheery wave of the hand, a paper rose in his coat, and the loan of ten bob from Clara for the expenses of the interview. Clara practises a few improbable dance-steps, and the first-act curtain comes down. Well, playwright, you may think you've got everything going pretty smoothly: but not your audience. Oh, dear, no. What are they saying to each other? "He's going to get *drunk*, that Jim." And can you deny it? You can't, you know. He's going to get stinking, that's what he's going to do.

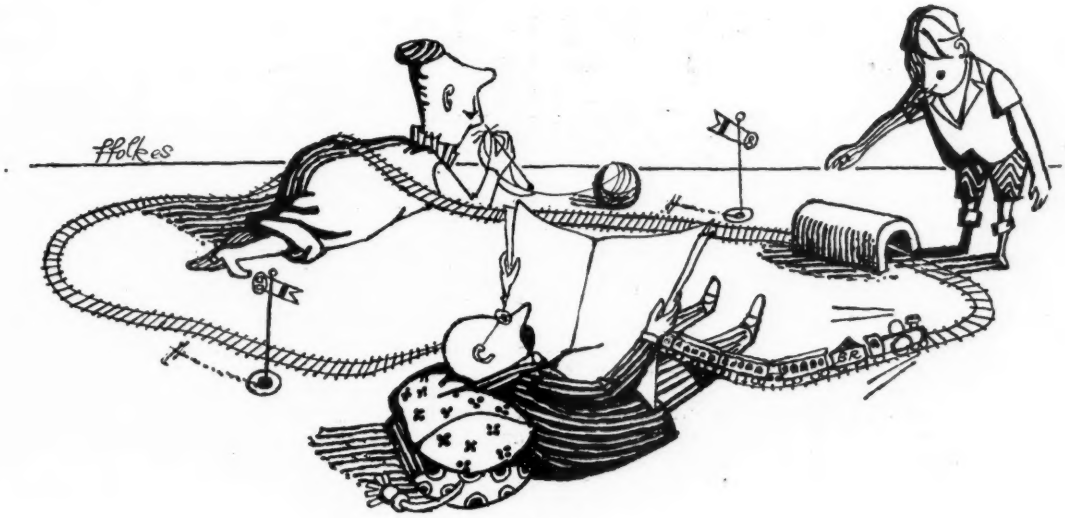
Or you can try this one. Beaded curtains, distant drums, a bottle of whisky, cane chairs, and the hotel bedroom off right. Here we have the lean, handsome, taciturn newspaper-man, jabbing away at his portable, with a gun in his armpit, secret papers in his shoe, and the local police commissioner offering him cheroots and warning him that this is no place for a white man. In comes Irma, the girl he met by chance in the local quayside night-club, got up very nattily in a split skirt and high heels. The newspaper-man has barely got rid of the copper and his cheroots, and settled down to discover that he and Irma both come from Austin, Texas, and were fashioned for each other, before the satisfied word goes round from gallery to orchestra: "She'll be the *spy*." And it's no good your saying, playwright, that there isn't a spy in the whole length and breadth of the play: that Irma's going to be up to some monkey-tricks with those papers before the night's out, and if we like to call her a spy, you stick to your own fancy names: you know very well what we mean.

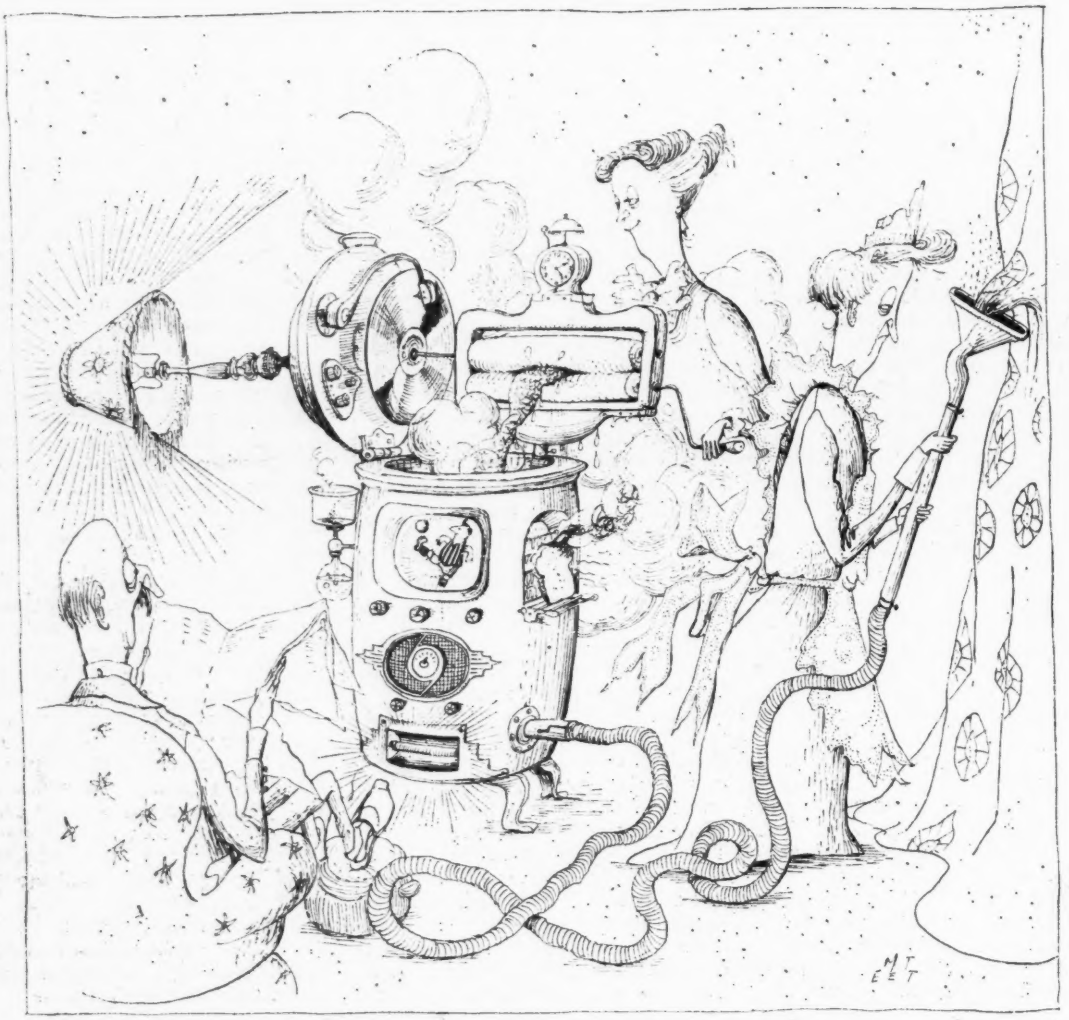
And you needn't think, playwright, that audiences have to wait until half-way through a play before they start tumbling to your crafty little secrets. One look at the situation when the curtain goes up on the first act (if they arrive in time) and they have the whole thing mapped out in their minds. Take the play set in some old house, with a suit of armour, an old oak chest, and a book-case in the back wall just about the size of a secret panel. In come a bright young man and a wide-eyed girl. The young man pulls out his cigarettes and spills confetti on the floor. The girl looks about her fearfully, and gives a little shiver as the butler takes her coat. Not a word spoken, mind you. But already the word is passed along the rows: "The house will turn out to be *haunted*." We're quick, you see. We never miss a thing. You thought you'd scare us with some headless fiend tiptoeing out of that sliding panel, didn't you? You're going to look pretty silly, aren't you, when he tiptoes out and we just nod to ourselves complacently?

I don't know what the record is, but I've seen a lady pigeon-hole a play in under three seconds after the rise of the curtain. She didn't *look* unusually bright, either. But believe me, the scene was no sooner revealed than she took a glance at the fluted columns, marble steps, and flaring torches, turned to her neighbour and said "It's one of those historical things." I'm not denying the possibility that her sister may have seen the show the night before and tipped her off: but I'm a simple soul, and I like to think it was sheer perspicacity.

Most remarkable of all, though, is the case of the wizards who can size a play up *before* the curtain rises. I've seen them open their programmes, read through the *dramatis personæ* and the synopsis of scenery, fold their programmes, lean back, unscrew a boiled sweet from its wrapper and say "This will be *very good*."

You see what I mean? You just can't *hope* to fight against that sort of thing. We've got you, whichever way you turn. You can't fool us.





"Ah, now! THAT'S *the idea! I've always held there were too many separate electric gadgets in the home."*

Wang Ho Sen

OLD Wang Ho Sen sought Truth and here and there
he travelled far, and searching everywhere
he ranged the Himalayan mountains cold,
until at last grey-bearded, tired and old,
before he passed, determined in despair,

he sat with Scribes with dusty parchments piled
around him, catalogued and neatly filed.
He fasted, scourged his shrinking flesh, but still
Truth always hid behind the distant hill.
He prayed to Buddha . . . Buddha merely smiled.

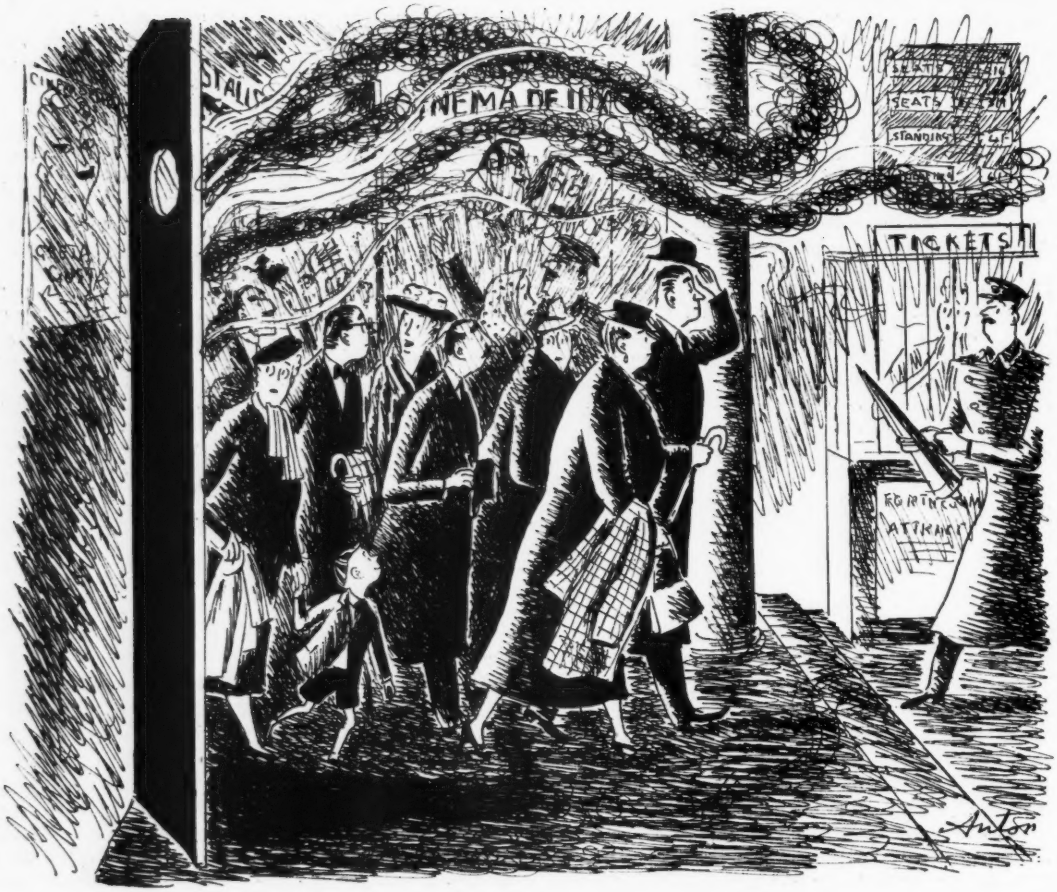
He mixed with men of Law and nimble wit;
queried the Markets where the merchants sit,
Asked of high Mandarins with bellies sleek
"Where is this Truth that I for ever seek?"
"Alas!" cried they, "we do not deal in it."

A beggar man beneath a willow tree
sneered "What has Truth to do with you or me?
Grasp thine illusions in thy fingers tight,
the Rose is sweet, why ruin its delight
by digging at its roots for all to see?"

At last he sought the gods of Wrong and Right;
they favoured him with more than mortal sight
and lifted up the Silver Veil . . . and then,
his longings satisfied, Old Wang Ho Sen
with blinded eyes ran screaming through the night.



THE NEW GHOST AT THE OLD INN



"I still say it didn't happen like this in the play."

American Commentary

VIII

GOOD EVENING. Before I talk about the to all intents and purposes certain prospect, now the election is over, that dollar aid to South Amnesia will, after all, be continued in full, or even possibly increased to two dollars, let me just explain one of the, to you, maybe less than self-explanatory differences the election has made: namely, that from now on such domestic differences as we may have, since they will by and large still be the same differences, are not in fact likely to make any actual difference you would notice—which will, I suspect, be good news to those of you who were maybe a little unsure just what the difference would have come to, had there been one. Now it is a fact which still scores getting on for full one-hundred-per-cent. undeniability over here that, our electoral system being what it is, the number of people voting to send all-out aid-to-South-Amnesia candidates to Congress from the Mid-Western sweet-potato belt need not—and, as it turned out, did not—have much actual relation to the number of those likely under any future circumstances to want them back there. As a matter of fact, leaving on one side the likelihood that what the Sleighride Institute got hold of were on this occasion the right answers to the wrong questions and not (as was at first assumed) merely the wrong answers to the right questions, it is beginning to look as if it may have been the last-minute insertion of a, till then, off-the-record hard-currency plank into Mr. Jerkwell's platform that cancelled out the shredded-wheat plank in his opponent's platform, and not the opposite way round. At all events, it is safe to say that what could, even at this stage, blow the administration's foreign policy sky-high—to put it no higher than that—would be the renewed suspicion that the President was planning to go behind the back of the Secretary of State and let down his plenipotentiaries. I can hear some of you saying that so long as we have finally gotten the election out of our systems it was maybe not such a bad idea at that; but I would remind you that the Sleighride Institute has so far made no statement in the matter and may not do so until after Secretary Birdseed's speech to the Amalgamated Noodle-Farmers next Friday. By then we may know definitely where the President stands on buckwheat prices (and the McCorkscrew papers are sticking to their story that right now he

is behind Secretary Doghouse) or else, at the very least, whether the administration intends to drop the Clam-Chowder Bill, wind up the Uncivil Activities Committee, and divert the new San Fiasco Seaway into the noodle-raising country of North Bazooka. In this event, of course, whatever Mr. Birdseed has to say to the noodle-farmers will be nothing to what the noodle-farmers will have to say to Mr. Birdseed. Meantime, nobody has very much doubt that the President is watching his step pretty closely in every direction right now, and especially in the direction of Senator Brickenbacker of Hideho, who has placed himself on record along with Governor Clam, part-author of the Clam-Chowder Bill, to the effect that, price-support or no price-support, the President's stock will be down to pre-election levels before next session, and that if he steps on the shredded-wheat plank it will be down there even sooner. This, as the hard-currency spokesmen have pointed out, is a by no means theoretical punch well below the political belt which could imply, literally, that with close on one-sixth of all shredded-wheat plants now shredding less wheat than the remaining five-sixths, the President cannot any longer afford the risk that organized labour will try to beat big business to the draw with an all-round two-cents wage-claim, as he would then be forced to choose between losing control of Congress, driving a coach-and-horses through the nineteenth amendment, and dropping the Clam-Chowder Bill into the San Fiasco Seaway. An even bigger danger, though, is that Congress may fight back on noodle prices, which are already running around three points lower than last year, and the next thing we know the President may have side-tracked labour, lost control of Secretary Doghouse, and be running around punching hard-boiled currency spokesmen below the popcorn belt. Whether or not the answer to this congressional headache will turn out, as seems likely, to be sweet potatoes, it is pretty generally admitted that however things look to qualified observers right now they quite easily may, and in fact most probably will, be looking as different as usual before the next American Commentary. Good night.

o o

Sing Hey or Else

THE man from the Ministry of Jinks and Capers sneezed twice and peered sternly through his glasses at Miss Hobbleday, to whom few things were sacred. "In spite of what some people seem to think," he said with a touch of edge, "this Merrie England campaign is no laughing matter."

Behind our gallant barrage of seasonable coughs Miss Hobbleday retreated into her huge red handkerchief and simulated catarrh. The Ministry man, somewhat mollified, slipped a tablet into his mouth and continued in tones of restrained friendliness:

"I don't want you to think that your village is being singled out for special blame. It is by no means the worst. The fact is that the Minister is most disappointed with the progress of the campaign to date. It is not being taken seriously. The Merrie England plan, he remains convinced, can and must be implemented. He is determined that the areas scheduled as Merrie shall play their part in our national recovery no less than those designated Industrial."

He blew his nose sternly. "Let us face the realities. If the Merrie Areas are to reach their provisional dollar-target our visitors from overseas must be provided with the Merrie England they expect to find. Ladies and gentlemen, they are not getting it."

This, he insisted, was hardly the Ministry's fault. It had already distributed six thousand four hundred and fifty prefabricated Tudor frontages, nine hundred and eighty-three tons of plastic fireproof thatch and more than a thousand art well-heads. In the market towns and the larger villages it had established or subsidized hundreds of Mediæval Butcheries and Olde Cake Shoppes. Its travelling Madrigal and Ministrelsie units were steadily covering the operative sectors. "For it is our belief," the Ministry man continued, "that England—I refer of course to its statutory Merrie areas—can once again, properly organized, be a nest of singing birds."

But the villages were unco-operative, or worse. Our own, it seemed, was not exempt. We had made a request—on the face of it a most gratifying one, which had been met with considerable difficulty—for a set of harps. These were subsequently found by a Ministry inspector in the gardens of various members of the parish council, being put to a most improper use.

"Runner-beans," rapped Colonel Snipe from the back of the hall. "Deuced sensible, if you ask me," he added disconcertingly.

"What," proceeded the Ministry man hurriedly, "is the trouble with the villages? I can give you the answer in a word. It is the villagers."

To achieve the envisaged Merrie standards it would unfortunately be necessary to keep the villagers as far as possible in the background. Their sophistication and lack of reverence for traditional values were having a most undesirable effect. Their speech, their dress, their habits were all wrong. Frankly, they did not fit into the pattern the Ministry had in mind. They were a danger to the Merrie dollar-target: frequently, he assured us, our guests complained that they might as well have stayed in Seattle or the Bronx.

It was at this point that we began to realize what was expected of us.

The Ministry man wooed us with a wintry smile. "Organized gaiety," he said suggestively. "Disciplined merriment. From the right people."

Miss Hobbleday's nasal notes no longer disturbed the silence. "Dancing on the green, which we are prepared to returf," he went on with growing ascendancy. "Mummers. Traditional songs in your own dialect. The Ministry will undertake to provide phonetic scripts."

Then he over-reached himself.

"And the village inn. Our visitors have been most disappointed in the village inn. What they expect to find are strong, atmospheric countrymen preferably wearing smocks and periodically making quaint, wise remarks. I suggest that the gentlemen—excluding of course the rector—might arrange this in relays."

But Colonel Snipe was by now on his feet. The remark that came from his corner was terse rather than quaint, and his expression as he stamped towards the door made the more knowing of us fear that he was about to change his ploughshares back into pikes.

"Meanwhile the ladies—" resumed the Ministry man, rallying pluckily. But then he made his second and fatal error. In campaigning for native woodnotes on the village green it was not much good appealing to Miss Hobbleday, but how was the unfortunate man to know that for fifteen years the fragile old lady had been playing the drums for Sam Snyder and His Rural Revellers?



I SHALL have to write a nice long letter to my benefactor in New York. I shall have to suggest as tactfully as possible that if she should ever decide to send me yet another food parcel—and such a gesture would overwhelm the last limits of munificence—I should be grateful if she would wrap it up in the political or financial sections of the *Journal-American* instead of the comic supplement. It will be a terribly difficult letter to compose. I shall have to explain that the reason for this strange request is not my consuming passion for news of Wall Street and Washington, but my fear and distrust of the American comic. I shall point out that I am a busy man and cannot possibly spare the time for the research needed to explain every picture and caption to the two children who share my roof and rations. The rich, raw colour and vast extent of these American comics, I shall say, proves irresistibly attractive to English children who catch a glimpse of such native heroes as Tiger Tim, Jacko and Joey only when the paper situation and the newsagent are favourable, and English children expect to understand these pictorial adventures in limitless detail.

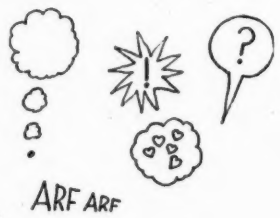


Flash Gordon

Take Flash Gordon. Flash (Mr. Gordon?) belongs to the same basic blood-group of strip characters as Marzipan the Magician, but instead of a plain, explicable wand he waves something called an atom-powered air-ray gun which fires a supersonic blast of deadly accuracy. We first encountered Mr. Gordon in a strip of utter horror. Hampered by the attentions of a gorgeous spy, Glitra, he stood face to face with an out-sized monster called a gas-spider. The caption read: "The gas-spider spits new sticky strands to trap its human prey and if Flash shoots, Glitra will see his secret weapon, his only hope for escaping Lostland!" All the same, he fires, redundantly, "an unheard supersonic blast," and the monster dies, or to be more accurate, "dissolves into a mound of green slime." The slime is right there in the third picture for all to see. But Glitra did not see the gun. "Great Tao! It's gone!" she gasps. "What happened?" And Flash double-talks in these words—"A huge spark . . . static from the car . . . the Haffenschafft effect . . . short-circuited ground potential . . . it just exploded!"

Just exploded! That's just it—it didn't! Try telling two normally inquisitive kids that it just exploded when they can see that static, ground potential, the Haffenschafft effect and atom-powered air-ray guns are involved! Not to mention the hideous heap of green slime! You see, adults are able to skim lightly over these pseudo-scientific explanations, absorbing on the way nothing more than a vague feeling of awe; but children stop and stare at every impenetrable piece of jargon and question everything and everybody until they are sure that Science has been done. Unfortunately, King Features Syndicate, Inc., do not issue a key to their exercises. They don't provide directions with their Haffenschafft effect or list the foodstuffs normally consumed by gas-spiders. Quite obviously they don't give a damn for the English circulation of their comics by way of food parcels. Not them!

Science is only one of the headaches. There are masses of hieroglyphics to be mastered before a person can begin to cope with American comics and serve as an effective interpreter. English children are quite familiar with the balloon device by which each speech in a strip is linked to the appropriate mouth-piece—it is hundreds of years old, anyway—but faced with such subtleties as:



they are hopelessly fogged and relentlessly curious. And it takes months of dogged and close study to master the precise significance of such ejaculations as—"Tsk-tsk," "Eefle," "Whap," "Poing," "Ouch Oink," "Z-z-z—," "Yipe," "Blat," "I Swow" and "Grits an' Gravy"—with or without exclamation marks.

Even when the text is relatively straightforward it is usually full of traps for the unwary—

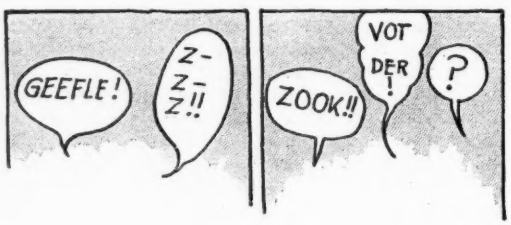
"Dan'l Riggs!! Whar on airth ye been all these years?"

"I been off a-workin' on a 'nanner boat, Snuffy!"

"Shh . . . tiptoe in th'house, Dan'l . . . Le's susprise Lowizie . . . Hey, Maw!!"

"What is it, Paw? I . . . uh . . . Great Balls o' Fire!!"

"Hody, Miz Smif." (*Barney Google.*)



(*The Katzenjammer Kids.*)

American comic strips are studied daily, and presumably understood, by four out of every five literate inhabitants of North America—that is, if the gallup-type pollsters are not yet entirely discredited. They appear on the inside back page of nearly all newspapers and frequently overflow into the society and small ads. columns. On Sundays they appear in larger, lengthier sequences in weighty full-colour supplements. They are also sold in book form (at 15 or 20 cents) from drug-stores and bookstalls throughout the United States and Canada. They are the chief, often the only fictional reading-matter of millions of American adults. In Britain things are vastly different: we have Sunday newspapers and the Lynskey Tribunal to go at.

The comic strip is not of course an American invention. Archæologists, gradually unearthing and deciphering the pictorial carvings of the ancient Egyptian and Babylonian tombs, have been known to collapse in helpless merriment and lie kicking in the sand. Even primitive man has left us cave-drawings which are obviously crude attempts at strip-cartoons. And nearer our own times there have been the strips of Hogarth, Rowlandson and Gillray. But only America, it may be said, saw the full possibilities of the comic. It was revived, animated, coloured and converted from a whimsical craft into a nation's literature. It first appeared in American magazines in the sixties of the last century, and its first stars were fairies. Thirty years later it reached the daily newspapers and began a spectacular advance towards prosperity. The fairies have now been dropped in favour of heroes and heroines as varied as Donald Duck, Li'l Abner, Tillie the Toiler and Superman. Looking through my last lot of wrapping, which, surprisingly enough, is headed with the quotation "What fools these mortals be!" I find Snookums (a baby addicted to "Wow!" and "Gaw Gaw!!"), Bringing up Father (a Mr. Jiggs who has been trying to disgrace his socialite wife, Maggie, for more than thirty years), Flash Gordon, Dick's Adventures (a tale of the Puritan pioneers and their struggles with the Indians), Blondie (with Dagwood), The Phantom, The Little King (one of the very few strips to achieve lucidity without balloons), Donald Duck, Barney Google, Prince Valiant (an Arthurian romance), the Katzenjammer Kids, Uncle Remus, Little Annie Rooney, Henry, Popeye, Jungle Jim, Tippie (a dog), Buz Sawyer, Steve Canyon, Little Iodine and the Lone Ranger. This list represents the contents of a typical Sunday supplement. Each strip occupies either a whole or half page and tells a story within a story in such a way that while the customer can feel satisfied with his ration his appetite for more can be whetted by the unbearable suspense of the last picture. It is the technique of the old serial movie. Competition among the strips is fierce and only the fittest survive to be translated into movies, radio and television shows, car mascots, dolls and furnishing motifs. Without a continuously high rating from the pollsters a strip is doomed; with one, it may become a gold-mine for its creators. Al Capp, the originator of Li'l Abner, is probably the highest paid comic artist in the world—after Walt Disney.

The comics are America's substitute for an evolutionary national folk-lore. They are the folk-lore of the twentieth century, dynamic, direct and devoid of allegory. Their props are the tools and gadgets of neotechnic society: their gods are Science and Enterprise. They tell their tales in the humble, often uncouth language of the masses and do not trouble to conceal their complete indifference to æsthetics. It is often said that Hollywood is out of touch with its customers, that it plays down to a common denominator of intelligence far lower than is strictly necessary for successful "box-office" productions. My view is the exact opposite. After a careful survey of my food parcel wrappers I am amazed that Hollywood dares to aim so high.

For anyone (a Russian, say) wanting to know something of the American way of life I would certainly recommend a course of study on the comics. He would not learn to write or speak the language grammatically or spell it accurately, but he would certainly acquire familiarity with American idiom and catch-phrases. He would discover that "a Buck Rogers set-up" and "Rube Goldberg plumbing" are the trans-Atlantic equivalents of "a Heath Robinson contraption," that a "Casper Milquetoast" is any chinless apostle of appeasement, that "Mutt and Jeff" are any inseparable friends or buddies . . . sooner or later every comic creation seems to become part of the language. He would discover, too, that America is almost a classless society, that money is the root of all evil in others, and that although Truth and Right invariably prevail, they do so only when all seems lost. He might be trapped into believing that firearms and atomic weapons are in general daily use in America, and that the population consists entirely of gangsters, poor Whites, supermen, bathing belles, spies and crazy scientists. All the same I should strongly urge him to complete the course. And when he had done so I should offer him employment immediately as wrapper-interpreter to my family. HOD.





"Good heavens—it IS *Turkish."*

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Stranger from Colchis

The Phasian Bird (FABER, 10/6) is Mr. HENRY WILLIAMSON's most effective book since *Tarka the Otter*. The author's deep preoccupation with the land is the book's underlying theme. He deals with the unhappy period of a quarter of a century after the close of the first world war, during which English agriculture was drained of its vitality, as the land of its fertility, by an unbalanced economic system; and if Mr. WILLIAMSON obtrudes politically tendentious factors into his analysis of this system, he may be forgiven for his sincerity of love for the land itself. Ostensibly, his story concerns the life of a hybrid golden pheasant born on a decaying Norfolk farm the successive tenants of which, in the years just before, and during the first half of, the second world war, meet their deaths by, respectively, suicide and murder. Mr. WILLIAMSON's characterization of his humans is sketchily adequate. His delineation of wild creatures, their lives, environment, and individuality comes off superbly well. Incidental to his story is a background of factual detail about farming fascinating in its richness, its mixture of matter-of-fact observations about artificial fertilizers and muck, and the poetical quality, comparable to that of a Constable landscape, with which he describes the changing scene of Nature. To read it is to know at second-hand the land he loves and understands so profoundly. R. C. S.

The New Mauriac

FRANÇOIS MAURIAC is one of the few contemporary novelists who seem really at home in the novel. He has an easy inventiveness which enables him to discuss or explore in narrative, without making the reader feel that the story is contrived to fit round an argument. His descriptive passages are always relevant. In *The Unknown Sea* (*Les Chemins de la Mer*), the third volume of Mr. GERARD HOPKINS's excellent translation of his works (EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, 9/-), the Revolous and Costadots are new creations, individual enough to be interesting and human enough to be the battleground of universal conflicts. They are citizens of the Bordeaux region, members of families with pride and property, who grow, are discouraged, make discoveries and confound predictions, as in life; they are also potential citizens of Heaven. Occasionally, as in the later history of Pierre Costadot, the non-Catholic may lose the thread. However, it will do him no harm to look for it. One of Mauriac's many claims to greatness is the variety of his appeal. Like the Victorian novelists he can satisfy very simple and very subtle readers: Rose Revolou's tragedy is moving on several levels. His professionalism inspires confidence. He never trifles elegantly with the secondary and eccentric, like so many modern English novelists, but concentrates seriously on serious, primary themes—Love, the Family, Property, Power, Charity and Damnation. If *The Unknown Sea* has not quite the overwhelming force of *Thérèse* it is at least a lesser peak in the same range. R. G. G. P.

From a Floating Studio

One can well imagine a landscape painter devoting himself solely to estuaries as attractive as Turner's "Avranches." Water-wrought contours are prevocative of good drawing, and nothing sets off a fine sky like wet mud. If you can purvey yourself a floating studio, as Mr. EDWARD SEAGO has done, you can move from one subject to another with no trouble over impedimenta or lodgings. His "Endeavour" is a converted naval pinnace, now known as an "auxiliary ketch"; he was rather dashed to find that it was not seaworthy enough to cross the Channel. But it is quite dependable on the Norfolk Broads, or even hugging the Norfolk coast; and *Tideline* (COLLINS, 16/-) is largely a duet, in prose and well-reproduced paintings, in praise of Norfolk. Occasionally the painter goes farther afield, and catches the tidal effect of a main-line station enveloped in fog and steam or the play of light on a lad getting up in a rather squalid bedroom. But his estuaries are the best. "The writing that runs all around them you know—just the easiest part," as the tiresome child said to Bret Harte, exhibits not only crusted East Anglians of vintage years but queer encounters like those with "Anya" in Venice and Miss Pennymore in her haunted house. Altogether, a good one-man show. H. P. E.

Cornish Memories

The main theme of *Up from the Lizard* (CARROLL AND NICHOLSON, 12/6) is Cornwall, where the author, Mr. J. C. TREWIN, spent his early years. His home was the Lizard, and in his seemingly artless and desultory way he evokes a vivid picture of the little town and its surroundings, grim and lonely in winter, and stern enough even in summer, with its iron cliffs rising out of the Atlantic. His father, the most vital character in the book, was a merchant seaman, who had sailed the world since boyhood and was never happy on land. In later years he used to take his wife with him; but hurricanes off Florida, a trip up the River Plate, a day or two in a Black Sea port were all one to Mrs. Trewin. She liked the sea, she told her son, because she could get through so much sewing. The author, less fortunate than his elder sisters, was born too late to take part in any of these voyages, and the restless adventurous temperament of his father was transformed in him into the love of drama in any form which occupies much of this book, and supplies one of its best episodes, when, in 1913, the first film ("Uncle Tom's Cabin") was shown

in the Lizard, to the immense excitement of the inhabitants, who were not in the least discouraged when the most touching episode in Little Eva's life appeared upside-down, or when, for two or three minutes, everyone in the film slid gracefully sideways. H. K.

Cartridge Papers

"Accidents, and those of a serious nature, sometimes occur at the *Lek-ställe*; for when, at early dawn, the fowler is stealing on the Capercali in a bent position, a brother sportsman similarly engaged may take him for a bear or other wild beast, and send a ball into his body, many instances of which are on record." If you don't want to be another instance on the record, read Hesketh Prichard's pages on Capercaillie in "BB's" *Shooting Man's Bedside Book* (EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, 12/6) before you go *leksträlling* in Sweden in spring. This new pocket-size anthology contains one hundred and thirty-nine pieces, in prose and verse, on every aspect of shooting, in many parts of the world. Arm-chair sport is a fine, and inexpensive, substitute for the real thing if you know your books. None knows the books, or the real thing, better than "BB," and in his gleanings from shooting literature he puts a mass of good stuff over the fireside gun. The big day, the potter-round-the-hedges, stalking, wildfowling (lots of wild-fowling), dogs, dog-training, tipping, cooking and carving game, manners, the law, record bags, poaching, guns, poodles, rookeries, odd information, a grouse and a hare and a salmon with one shot, skinning and mounting, hanging, ballistics, bustards; and a pig which was taught to point for Sir Henry Mildmay and retrieve game, and which, when her master died, was sold at an auction of his *pointers*. "BB" has picked well, from his own writings, and from Patrick Chalmers (that scholar-naturalist, prince and paragon of "peat-hag and plus-fours" poets), Peter Hawker, Richard Jefferies, John Masefield, W. H. Hudson, Eric Parker, Payne-Gallwey, Hugh Pollard, Charles St. John, Peter Scott, Gilbert White, Noel Sedgwick, Stuart Wortley and all. D. J. Watkins-Pitchford's scraper-board decorations are exactly right for the mood of the book. R. A. U.

It Isn't Far from Stratford.

"Crack-brained Brensham," Mr. JOHN MOORE assures us, is no village in particular, "but a synthesis of villages." His pointers to its whereabouts on the map of England are, however, sufficiently precise. It lies at any rate within the marches of Shakespeare's country; which lends a tinge of colour, perhaps, to William Hart's conviction that he was of the blood of the Bard. That it lies also in Housman's country is less relevant: suicidal tendencies are inconspicuous among the lads of this village, though it is true that a taste for malted liquor is well in evidence. They are (the lasses included) a jovial crew, about some of whose goings-on Miss Mitford would doubtless have thought silence best, and the most jovial of all is—alas! was—old William Hart, a Homeric laugher and a Falstaffian toper, a mighty wencher in the days of his glory, a farmer who raised his crops by sympathetic magic (being of the kin, also, of the garden god), and a most valiant flouter of authority. Hence *The Blue Field* (COLLINS, 12/6); for when authority bade William sow a certain field with oats he sowed it with linseed, and the result was a scandal to bureaucracy but a delight to the appreciative eye. Mr. MOORE'S eye is very appreciative indeed, both of earth's beauties and of men's idiosyncrasies; but his heart also is involved in his theme, and from the amplitude of his affection there has flowed into his pages something of that cordial quality which an earnest young M.P. (Lab.) and his still more earnest young wife discovered in William's home-made wine. F. B.

Maman Noël

Beauty for Ashes (BLACKWOOD, 12/6), by WINIFRED FORTESCUE, is described by the author as "a queer much-interrupted book" which was begun and finished in England during the intervals of her work for France. Readers of her previous reminiscences, who remember her home in Provence and the sad leaving of it when France fell, will rejoice in the chapters about her return to the flower-smothered garden and about the relief she brought to the (then) starving country people. Earlier chapters tell how Lady FORTESCUE raised a fund and gifts by lectures, appeals and an enormous fête. Sometimes she lived in a caravan, and sometimes in cottages. It is a gracious, light-hearted and great-hearted book. As one reads, one is amazed that one delicate woman could have suffered so much, laughed so much, felt so much and, above all, done so much. She shows us her heart, so that we agonize with her over her little black dog and laugh with her about the errant pig, but find it difficult to recognize her tremendous capacity for organization. Yet, as one result of her crusade, eight thousand garments were sent to Provence. She sorted these herself so that each baby in the district had a layette and each child shoes and clothes that *fitted*. Her reward came one Christmas when she listened to *le hymne Anglais*, saw a Nativity play in which the chorus of angels wore muddy shoes, wreaths of greenery and little summer frocks of pale blue, pink or yellow sent from America and given with the English winter woollens, and listened to "three English cheers" for *Maman Noël*. B. E. B.



"Right! Identity cards, driving licences, and insurance certificates, please."

The Cosmic Mess

(SOMEHOW or otherhow, this column must try to keep up with our lively B.B.C. So this paragraph is specially written for Mr. and Mrs. Snootles, 41 Pine Cottages, Bloxton-on-Sea, and their daughter Maggie, whose birthday it is to-day—no, to-morrow. It is written at the request of Sapper Snootles (BF 1234567), now serving at Kennelmarsh. This is the Sapper's way of saying "Hullo" to Mum, Dad and Maggie. Why he couldn't send them a nice "Hullo" on a postcard we can't tell: but there it is. Stand by, Mum, Dad and Maggie—this is *your* paragraph.)

A report from Moscow—printed in the *Daily Mail*—has caused consternation in British Circus circles. The Circus in Moscow, it seems, is now a "progressive democratic art". And, according to *Pravda*:

"Our young circus artists, many of whom are members of Soviet Youth organizations, have created a new Soviet style, natural and full of ideology, which is vastly different from the completely decadent capitalistic circuses."

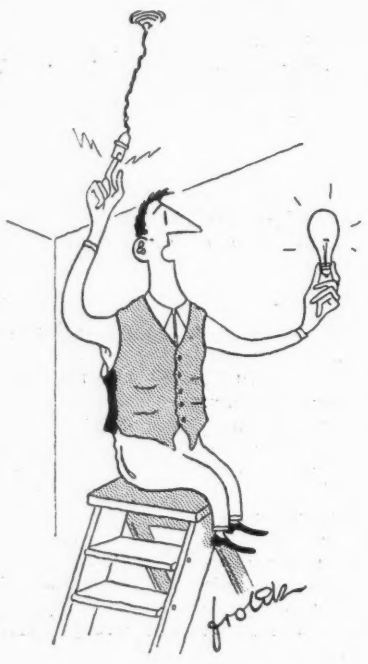
And not the young artists only, the story goes. Soviet circus elephants have thrown off that bulky shape, that cumbrous and slothful walk. They are now streamlined and angular and march at a brisk pace with their heads in the air, as an Elephant of the Soviet Revolution should. The Arithmetical Horses, which used to add two and two with the old bourgeois result, now make it a good ideological five. No animal of any kind is allowed to do a solo turn, for this might encourage any latent trends in the audience towards individualism and diversionary behaviour. All the sea-lions, all the dogs, must balance balls on their noses at the same time: and even the *Haute École* must be a collectivist demonstration. This makes things a little difficult for the trainers, who have to create six stars instead of one: but they go to it pretty dynamically. The very Ring is no longer a ring—the round ring of course being a shameful legacy from Imperialist Rome. Instead there is an Oval, the symbol of Birth: and the horses do not run against the clock as in our own decadent circuses, but *with* the clock, to symbolize Progress. There are no Clowns, in our sense of the term: for men in baggy trousers and crumpled hats, kicking and tumbling over each other, are considered to affront the dignity of the Toiling Masses. Instead of Clowns there are Heralds and Wise Men. The Heralds, from time to time, make electrifying announcements about the progress of the Fifteen Years' Plan: and, between turns, the Wise Men engage in discussions, into which they do their utmost to draw the children, concerning the beauty of Collective Irrigation or Planned Thought.

At home, only one of our dull circus-managers has tried to make his show truly natural and ideological: and he has not got far. His main idea was to drape every animal in Union Jacks. But the children soon wearied of this: and the six Indian tigers methodically ate their trainer.

* * * * *

(The next paragraph is for little Jonathan Taylor, who lives near Eastbourne. Little Jonathan had a birthday in October, and this paragraph is written for his birthday at the request of his loving godfather, Mr. Haddock. Little Jonathan had a birthday last year, too, but his loving godfather forgot it. His godfather says that this paragraph will have to do for the two years. Next year he shall have another.)

This column is a little worried about this diary business. Almost every day it reads that somebody's diary has been "put in evidence", or the Judge has told somebody to go home and get his diary, or, worse, somebody has been challenged to explain or defend some entry in his diary. The assumption seems to be that everyone keeps diaries in a methodical manner, putting down every important meeting or deed, or that, anyhow, what is there is a kind of proof, or raises a presumption, that certain things occurred. This column hopes very keenly that its honour and credit in a court of law will never depend upon its diary: for it has to report that the theory mentioned above is a very long way from the facts of life. There is hardly anything in this column's diary that makes much sense, and nothing at all that would stand up to a cross-examination by the Attorney-General. Look, for example, at Tuesday, October 5th. There in this column's writing is "Arrive Santos". All right. But now look at Thursday, October 7th. There again it says "Arrive Santos". And then on Friday, October 8th, it says "Arrive Santos. Arrive Monte Video". Which is quite impossible, and would look pretty fishy before a Tribunal. But it's quite simple—the ship was late. Here on Tuesday, October 19th, it says "Fly to Rio, 9.0 A.M." But, it also says "4.45 P.M. Address 20th Century Club, Buenos Aires". Quite simple. This column changed its mind. But what a mess its diary would be in the box!



"Well, there's nothing much wrong with this lamp."

There is worse. On Friday, December 10th, it is quite clear, this column dined with a man called Bubbles. There it is—"Bubbles—7.30." But it never happened. What happened was this. Bubbles rang up and said "Will you dine on Friday?" meaning Friday, November 12th. "Let us look at the little book", this column said: and then "Very well". And, as often happens on the telephone, it noted the engagement for the right day but the wrong *month*—"Friday, *December* 10th". Just before the right day the two men met and the mistake was cleared up. *But this column never bothered to correct the mistake in the diary.* What is more—*this column did not even dine with Bubbles on Friday, November 12th.* Why not? It can't remember. You put it to this column that it does remember, do you? Well, it doesn't. What is more, this column *never has dined with Bubbles!* Does that matter? Well, yes, it may. Because, if you examine the diary, it

looks as if this column had dined with Bubbles once a month, all the year. Well, Bubbles has done his best, his hospitablest: but, for one reason or another, it has never happened. *You* believe this column, of course. But the diary would finish it. And what, for heaven's sake, is this awful entry on Wednesday, December 1st? It looks like:

"Wragg (2), Plumb (2) (H.B.) St'd."

That would be a nice thing for the Tribunal to see—especially as this column has no notion what it means. On the following Saturday (December 4th) we note, with some dismay, the entry "? Dogs". Damning. But most misleading. Because, whenever we decide ahead to go to the dogs, we hardly ever do. But, whenever we decide to have a quiet Saturday night in the home, we very often, at the last moment, do go to the dogs. But then it never appears in the diary. And that will show you, milords, just how deceptive diaries can be.

* * * * *

And now, children, we have a surprise for you. Our Guest Columnist this week is none other than—Stand by! Hold your breath!—

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS, CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER!

"Good morning, Sir Stafford. And a happy New Year to you! It's very good of you to visit our little column."

"Thank you, my dear column. I wonder whether you realize how much you mean to me—and not only to me but to the whole export dri——"

"Do you *read* us, Chancellor?"

"Every Wednesday morning, when I wake for work (about five or six), I say 'Ha! This is Wednesday morning! This is Column Day! Five minutes' joy before I redistribute the national taxation!'"

"Very gratifying, Chancellor, this column is sure. But do you not find the other mornings a bit of an anti-climax?"

"Not at all. I read you again every morning till the following Wednesday."

"Chancellor, you overwhelm this column. Now, we wondered whether, perhaps, you could give this column some sort of a message about the flattening of the curve of productivity? Do you, at the moment, perceive any significant trends?"

"Significant? Well, no. Indicative, perhaps—no more; and, of course, short-term."

"Indicative, Chancellor, of anything particular?"

"Well, yes—of occupational reluctance."



"It's the sound effects department, Sir Harold. They want permission to burn down Studio B to give the impression of silver paper being rustled."

"Could you develop that, Chancellor?"

"How shall I phrase it? Shall I say—industrial effort-lag?"

"You mean—'slacking-off'?"

"On no account."

"This column apologizes. Would you, Chancellor, associate this short-term indicative trend with any particular social phenomenon, with any special causating conditions?"

"Well, of course, there is Christmas."

"Chancellor, we never thought of that! Thank you. But, now you have reminded us, we imagine that at this generous season, this time of giving, your next Budget must be much in your mind?"

"Naturally."

"Would it be fair to say that your official bosom is harbouring some highly unofficial trends and indications?"

"Of course I must not anticipate my Budget statement. But if you assure me that it will not go beyond this patriotic column——"

"Chancellor! Of *course*!"

"Then I may say that the current trend is towards what is called the slashing of the purchase tax, the drastic reduction of the duties on nicotine and alcohol products, and the abolition of the entertainments duty."

"Thank you, Chancellor. And may this column and its uncountable readers wish you an unusually happy New Year!" A. P. H.

There's Nothing Like Leather.

I MADE my way cautiously along the broken pavement until I found myself opposite a window in which hung a postcard, yellowed with age and bearing the legend "REPAIRS CERTAINLY NOT ACCEPTED." This, according to Antony's description, was indeed the shop of the Wonderful Little Man. I carried out instruction two—"Rap *loudly* on the *window*." At once there rose above the lace curtain the indignant face of the Wonderful Little Man himself. Some strands of black hair had been gummed securely across his bald head, giving it rather the appearance of a three-dimensional backgammon board. His mild blue eyes glared behind a pair of thick gold-rimmed spectacles, and as he spoke a shower of small nails rattled briskly against the window-pane.

"What do you want?" I understood him to say.

In reply, as Antony had instructed, I indicated the front door of the house with a good clear pointing action, at the same time moving my lips ostentatiously to show that I would be speaking to him if he could hear me.

Suddenly the door opened and I hurried into the passage.

"They ain't ready," he said. "I said I wouldn't never 'ave 'em ready, and I ain't gottem ready." He pushed me backwards towards the pavement.

Wedging myself tightly in the doorway with an old golfing umbrella on which was chalked "BARGAIN FOR KEEN PLAYER," I pointed out that I had with me a pair of black shoes, which I wanted him, as a special favour to my brother Antony, to repair for me. At this he paused a little.

"Just a minute," he gasped. "Just one minute. You aren't 'im."

I admitted it.

"You aren't," he continued, getting the whole thing clear, "that bloke what come in larse week, as it might be Wednesday. 'E come in 'ere and 'e said 'e wanted 'em done by yessday. I *told* 'im I woon't gettem done, and I 'aven't *gottem* done."

I coughed and suggested that we might move into his front parlour, which had been converted into a shop, so that he might cast his highly-skilled eye over my shoes. He glared at me.

"Don't keep me out 'ere in the passidge then," he said. "Perhaps I did take you for a pair of gent's brown swayed soles *and* heels, but you ain't got no call to stick out in the passidge in the cold. Not," he added as he swerved adroitly round a pile of ex-Army football bladders, "that the weather's *your* fault. You carnelp it no more than I carnelp it. You never voted for 'em; I never voted for 'em, but they're in, and all they're doin' is reducin' this country to derision and *spit*. How much does fifteen pounder leather cost now compared with what it was *pre*-war?"

I said I didn't know, but I supposed considerably more.

"Ho," he snorted. "You're stickin' up for 'em now, are you?"

With my well-known tactful smile I suggested that it was terrible weather.

"Well may you say it's terrible leather," he bellowed, thumping the counter fiercely with the heel of a richly upholstered Edwardian dance slipper; "because it ain't leather—it's CARDBOARD. They bring it 'ere and all it is it's CARDBOARD!"

"That must be difficult to work with," I hazarded.

"The workers?—They don't care. They'd rather—they'd *rather* earn more money with a machine." I tried to interject a profound remark about the place of the true craftsman in an industrial civilization, but he forestalled me with a dramatic gesture.

"Look at my two sons"—he pointed to an advertisement for Someone's blacking—"they earn ten sovereigns a week in a factry and they gone *Communist*. I dono why I keep goin'."

As this seemed a good opportunity I showed him my shoes. He ran his thumb fiercely round the heels.

"Look at these," he cried, breaking small pieces away with his hands. "They ain't got no seatin's. You can't look me in the face and tell me they got seatin's in. I can't work on this stuff nowadays."

I said shyly that perhaps I had better take them elsewhere.

"Brown paper," he moaned gently. "'E brings me in thick brown paper and garnidge. What you want doin' to 'em?"

"Soled and heeled, please," I said in that winning voice I have been practising for the last nine years.

"Ho. I thought you might *wantem* repaired," replied the Wonderful Little Man. "I ain't takin' no *repairs*. Still, if that's all you want I might as well takem."

He threw them with great force up to the top of a mountain of miscellaneous footwear which rose towards the ceiling in the far corner of the room.

"Do you want my name?" I asked hesitantly.

"Well, lessee. Day's Tues . . . Satday . . . gimme five . . . look in Monday week and see 'ow far I got. Ain't got no 'elp now. They took my lad away. 'E wanted two sovereign a week so I sent 'im packin'. Now 'e works in a factry and 'e's gettin' married nex' week."

I wrote my name on a slip of paper, handed it to him, and tiptoed from the shop. As I fought my way past the golf-umbrella I heard him declaiming still in an angry baritone.

". . . Married! And why, I'd like to know? Ain't there enough misery and disection in this world already . . ."

I think I shall persuade Antony to go along on Monday week. After all, he discovered the Wonderful Little Man, and I did agree to collect his brown suède shoes for him.

Here ends Mr. Punch's Two  Hundred and Fifteenth Volume

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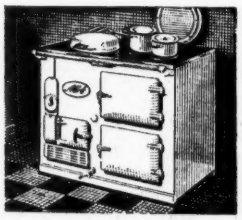
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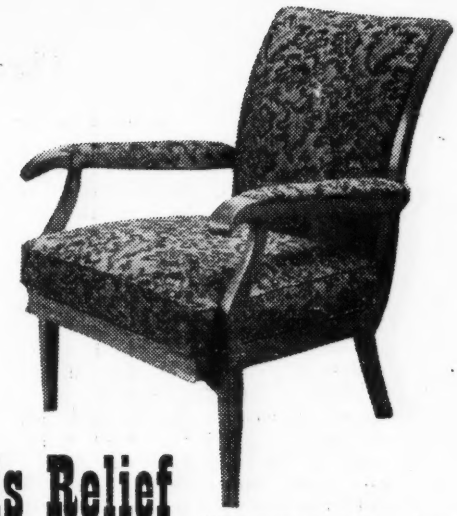
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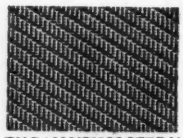
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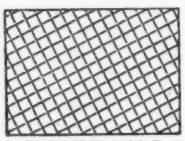
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Beautiful and distinctive . . . in chromium or enamel with red, green or black relief. Price complete with Drip Tray 74/9d. Supplies very limited.

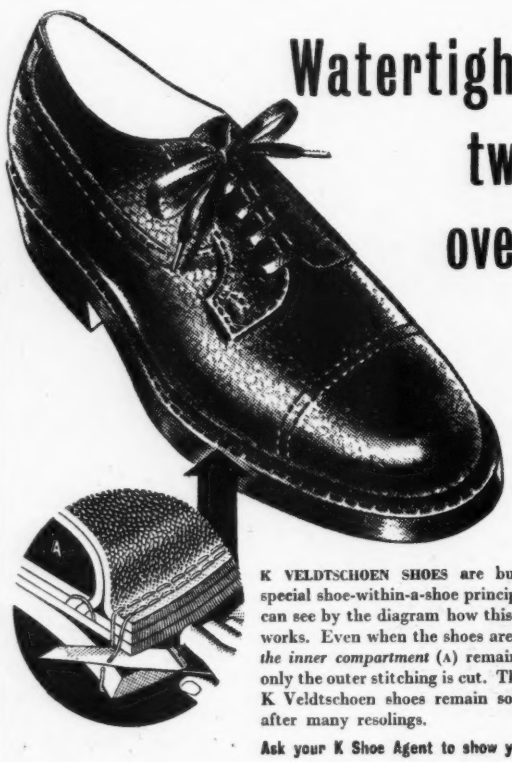
REPAIR SERVICE—Old Sparklets Syphons can now be renovated or repaired quickly at moderate cost . . . Write for particulars of the New Streamline Syphons or Syphon Repair Service to:

SPARKLETS LTD. LONDON N18

four against pain

MODERN medical science has proved that for real relief from pain, what is needed is not *one* remedial agent, but a combination of *four*. * These four agents—acetyl-salicylic acid, phenacetin and codeine (which are sedatives) and caffeine (which is a stimulant) combined together, act synergistically in 'Cogene'. That is why 'Cogene' is so effective for quick and satisfying relief of headaches, rheumatic pains, toothache, backache, neuralgia, and for help against colds. Non-habit forming. No harmful after-effects. 1/3 from all chemists.

'COGENE'
Regd. Brand Tablets
the perfect modern formula for the 4-way relief of pain
A 'GENATOSAN' PRODUCT



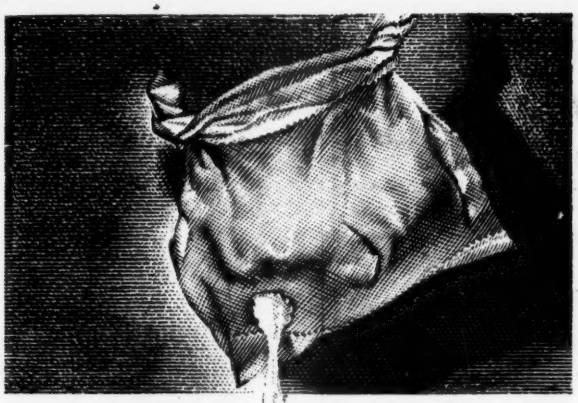
Watertight twice over

K VELDTSCHOEN SHOES are built on a special shoe-within-a-shoe principle. You can see by the diagram how this principle works. Even when the shoes are repaired, *the inner compartment* (A) remains intact; only the outer stitching is cut. That is why K Veldtschoen shoes remain sound even after many resolings.

Ask your K Shoe Agent to show you a pair.

K VELDTSCHOEN for a man





MELTING STEEL . . . IN A PAPER BAG!

Using the radio frequency system of heating, it is possible to melt a piece of steel *inside a paper bag.* This experiment illustrates the fundamental difference between the high frequency system and usual forms of heating. By the new method, the heat is generated *inside* the material being treated.

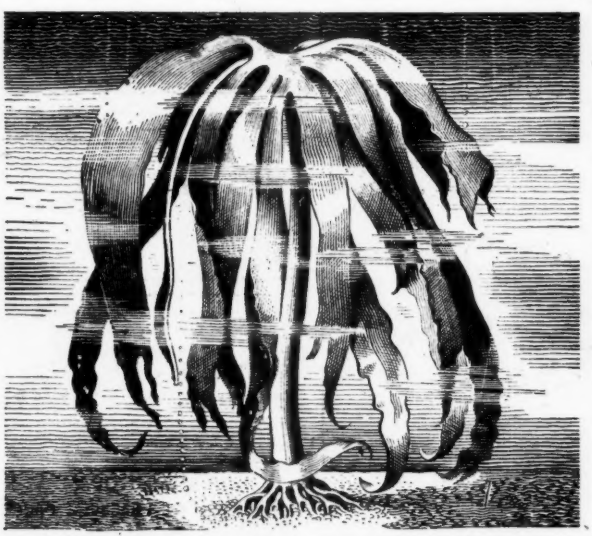
The high frequency system has many applications in industry, such as hardening, soldering, melting, etc., but careful investigation of individual problems is usually necessary in order to make the best use of this revolutionary heating process.

Philips scientists and engineers have been foremost in developing the possibilities of the high frequency induction system of heating metals.

PHILIPS ELECTRICAL
LIMITED

RADIO AND TELEVISION RECEIVERS · TUNGSTEN, FLUORESCENT AND DISCHARGE LAMPS AND LIGHTING EQUIPMENT · INDUSTRIAL ELECTRONIC APPARATUS · HIGH FREQUENCY HEATING GENERATORS · X-RAY EQUIPMENT FOR ALL PURPOSES · ELECTRO-MEDICAL APPARATUS · ARC AND RESISTANCE WELDING PLANT AND ELECTRODES · MAGNETIC FILTERS . BATTERY CHARGERS AND RECTIFIERS · SOUND AMPLIFYING INSTALLATIONS.

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(P423K)



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Laminaria cloustoni is a seaweed found on the Scottish coasts. From it are produced Alginates used to form gels and viscous solutions of value in many industrial processes, pharmaceuticals and foodstuffs.

ALBRIGHT & WILSON LTD
CHEMICALS
ALGINATES
YBW15



P/486A

"... have you saved £40 on your A.O.A. round trip?" ★

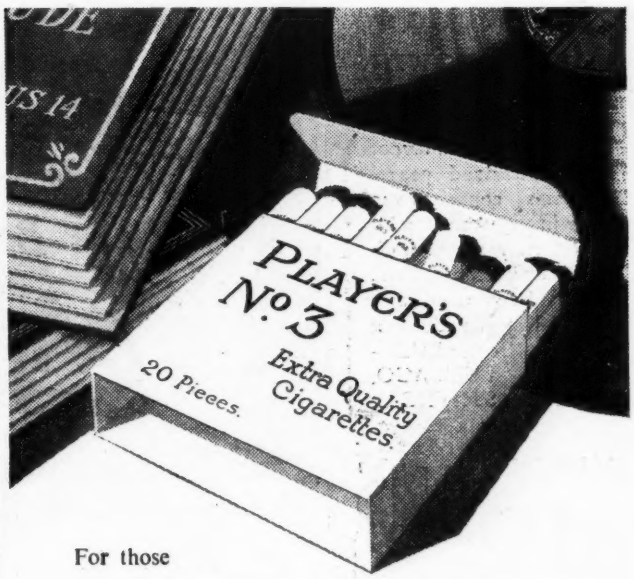
A.O.A. now offer a further 25% reduction on fares (already previously reduced by 10%), for round trips to the United States. For example, the new Excursion fare from London to New York and back is only £115 . 16s. — a reduction of over £40 on the normal fare. Fares cover delicious meals and drinks (cocktails, sherry, Scotch and Rye), served on board every Flagship. There are no tips or extras. These special 30-day round-trip fares will operate from October 1st, 1948 to March 31st, 1949, (trip must be completed by April 30th, 1949), and are from all parts of Europe to New York, Boston or Gander (Newfoundland).

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in search of the richer rewards

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PLAYER'S NUMBER 3
THE EXTRA QUALITY CIGARETTE

[3P95]



Hurrah for

Spa

(Regd)

SPA TOOTHBRUSHES
(Nylon or Bristle)
● SPA HAIRBRUSHES
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● *Lovely to look at—*
Ideal for Xmas presents

AT THE END OF YOUR TETHER?

These are "nervy" days, and the tension, far from slackening, tends to tighten. No wonder so many feel near the end of their tether, with nerves on edge.
"SANATOGEN" Tonic Wine is an admirable restorative, for it combines the "pick-me-up" qualities of a rich, full-bodied wine with the active tonic properties of "SANATOGEN" Nerve Tonic Food.



'SANATOGEN' TONIC WINE

10/- PER BOTT. 5/6 HALF BOTT.

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Vamour

now 18/6 a bottle



also available in
½ Bottles and Large Bottles
9/6 *and* **22/-**
Quality unchanged

Still the best you can buy
Sweet or Dry

VERMOUTIERS VP (LONDON) LTD.

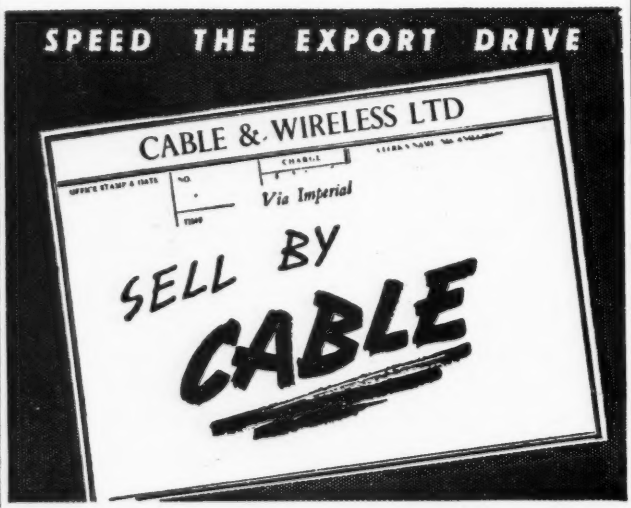
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Country House Hotel, Freshwater, Isle of Wight. From 6 gns weekly, write to Cook's, Dept. FAR/1/JA, Berkeley St., London, W.1, or Branches.

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"OKILL" PRESSURE GAUGE Regd. (or INDICATOR)
for measuring the magnitude of rapidly pulsating pressures in Cylinders, Pumps, Fuel injection Pumps, and I.C. Engines. Ask for Literature.
GEORGE TAYLOR (Brass Founders) Ltd., BOLTON, Eng.

HOWARDS ASPIRIN
IT IS NOT THE CHEAPEST
IT IS THE BEST



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. . . you are invited to utilise the many services provided by the Bank.

Enquiries will be welcomed at any of the numerous Branches throughout England and Wales.

National Provincial Bank
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NPB for service



the more the vibration,
the more the need for
an Aerotight Nut.



G.K.N. Aerotight Nuts are one-piece all-metal self-locking nuts. Unaffected by oil, water, humid conditions and varying temperatures. Available in a complete range of sizes in Steel, Stainless Steel, Light Alloy and Brass.

GKN GUEST KEEN AND NETTLEFOLDS (MIDLANDS) LIMITED

SCREW DIVISION, BOX NO. 24, HEATH STREET, BIRMINGHAM, 18



Don't be a Magpie with scrap! Don't let it settle down to rust away in the works yard. Get on to your scrap merchant to get it off the premises. For the sake of the whole national effort turn in *everything* redundant—the sooner it's in the scrap merchant's hands the quicker it can be turned into the tools and machines the nation needs.

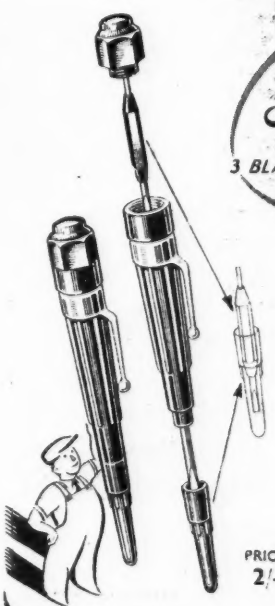
This appeal is directed to works only. Transport and other facilities may make it possible to widen this later to cover household and other light iron and steel scrap.

Chase THAT SCRAP! BRITISH IRON & STEEL

ISSUED BY THE BRITISH IRON AND STEEL FEDERATION

A *POCKET* Edition..
the 'STEAD'
SCREWDRIVER

3 in One
3 BLADES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



Clips in the pocket like a fountain pen, always to hand for the odd job on the spot. A really handy little tool, one of the many products made by Stead.

OBTAINABLE AT ALL CHAIN STORES

PRICE 2/-

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ROSS'S
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GINGER ALE
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While still restricted at home we are exporting again

SENIOR'S
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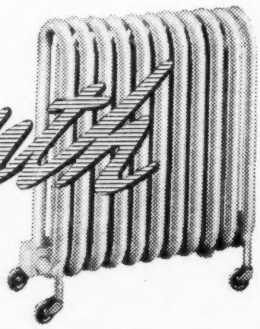
What is named on the Label Is found in the Jar!



Nothing seems impossible when your energy springs from

TUROG
BROWN BREAD
Difficulty with supplies? Then write to—
SPILLERS LTD., 40, ST. MARY AXE, E.C.3

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ON WHEELS!

oil-filled portable electric
"Central Heating"

Oil-filled radiators require no maintenance and no refilling - No fire risk - No fumes - Economical 3 Heat controls - Plug in anywhere, completely mobile - Humidifier attachment.

Ideal for Homes, Offices, Nurseries, Sick Rooms

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"Such a HEAVENLY flavour"



There is no better coffee obtainable than

"FIFTH AVENUE" PURE COFFEE

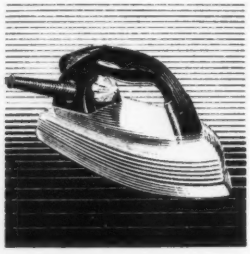
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Price 1/8d. per ¼-lb. tin

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In the home for a LIFETIME

Heat-controlled Electric Iron with Aluminium Soleplate.



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Identified by the Quality
BULPITT & SONS LTD. (DEPT. U), ST. GEORGE'S WORKS, ICKNIELD ST., B'HAM 18

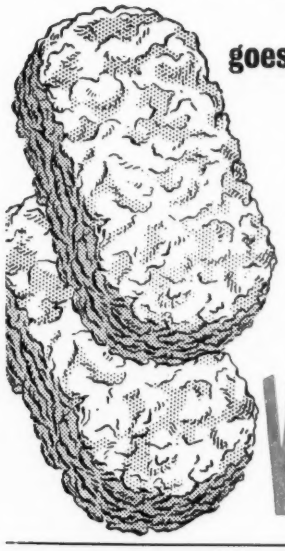
M-W. 97

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Slumberland
MATTRESSES OF QUALITY REGD.

OUR CRAFTSMEN are proud to put the Slumberland label on mattresses they make. When buying a Slumberland mattress be sure the Slumberland label is sewn on the cover.

Only the finest selected wheat . . . malted, salted, and toasted goes into Weetabix



WEETABIX is the whole wheat cereal food that everybody likes, not only for breakfast but for every meal of the day. Although Weetabix is delicious with milk and sugar, you will find it just as appetizing and nourishing when served with fruit juices, margarine, jam or a savoury. Weetabix needs no cooking—it's a meal in a moment, in itself.

8½d. & 1/3 PER PACKET

Weetabix

MORE than a Breakfast Food

Longer sleep . . . . shorter queues?

THE Government says there's only one way to fill the shops and shorten the queues—we've got to earn more dollars with the export drive.

Fine! But this means hard work, and hard work takes energy. We're all working pretty hard as it is, either at home in the kitchen or out at a job. And most of us get pretty tired. Why, we often wake up tired!

We certainly need more energy. How can we get it?

Well, our energy is controlled by food and sleep. Food is rationed, sleep isn't. If we slept longer, could we work harder? Would more sleep mean more production, more dollars, shorter queues?

It depends on the *kind* of sleep. You prove this for yourself when you wake up tired in the morning after quite a long night's sleep.

Only deep sleep has the power to restore during the night the energy we use during the day.

That is why Horlicks is so valuable at bedtime. It promotes the deep sleep you need. Drink Horlicks at bedtime, and you'll wake up in the morning brimming with energy. Production drive? Washing-up drive? You can take it!



HORLICKS

Soupy says:—



Watch for Soupy at your local cinema

Six delicious, nourishing platefuls from 7½d pkt. 3d pkt. serves two



SYMINGTON'S THICK SOUPS

- *Save money on food*
- *Contains body-building protein*
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- *Wonderfully delicious — 9 varieties*

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It's a dream . . . it's

HARELLA

Created by L. Harris Ltd., 243 Regent St., London, W.1

A word to expectant Mothers



As you know the right kind of food makes all the difference to your health and well-being when you are expecting a baby. Here are three simple rules that help you to look forward to a happy, healthy waiting time.

1. Make a point of eating all your own rations. Don't "sacrifice" any to other members of the family.
2. Eat plenty of salads, lightly cooked greens, and other vegetables.
3. Above all, *take all your extra allowances of foods and vitamin supplements, right from the time you know Baby is on the way.*

These are :

ORANGE JUICE : ALSO
COD LIVER OIL OR VITAMIN A & D TABLETS

You should take these vitamin-rich foods every day without fail. They help to keep you fit, build resistance to infection, and help Baby to develop the foundations of good health, sturdy bones and fine teeth.

MILK. In addition to your ordinary allowance, you are entitled to an extra pint of milk a day, at 1½d. a pint or where little money is coming into the home, it may be available free.

Milk is the finest "all-round" food, rich in material to build Baby's sturdy body and in growth-promoting vitamins.

EGGS. You are entitled to an extra shell egg on each allocation and one packet of dried egg free of points in each 8-week period. Eggs are another food rich in body-building nourishment and protective vitamins.

MEAT. A half-ration of meat a week in addition to your ordinary ration adds to the body-building food you need at this time.

FRUIT. You get an extra allocation on every ordinary allocation of Oranges. Take advantage of this health-giving and pleasant addition, but don't leave off your Orange Juice. Your supplementary book also entitles you to ½ lb. bananas on each allocation.

How to get YOUR EXTRAS

Get a certificate from your doctor, midwife or health visitor. Take it to the Food Office, and you will receive a supplementary Grey Ration Book (RB7). Use this book to get your extra milk, meat, eggs and fruit from your usual retailers. It also contains coupons for your Orange Juice and Cod Liver Oil or Vitamin Tablets, which you get from a distribution centre — your Food Office will tell you your nearest one. The Cod Liver Oil or Vitamin Tablets are free, the Orange Juice is 5d. a bottle (but free for those entitled to free milk).

When Baby is Born

The Grey Ration Book must now be handed back to the Food Office, but you will get a Green Ration Book which entitles Baby to a priority allowance of milk, the full range of rations (other than tea) and Orange Juice and Cod Liver Oil, and you will be able to get Vitamin A and D Tablets for yourself for 30 weeks after Baby is born.

ASK YOUR FOOD OFFICE about anything else you want to know. Don't hesitate — the staff is there to help you !

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (S.208)



The glow of good health is the finest defence against winter weather. The body, given sufficient supplies of 'protective' vitamin A and 'sunshine' vitamin D, is helped to resist infection from colds and influenza. In these austere days it is well to reinforce the normal supply of vitamins A and D by taking Crookes Halibut Oil each day. Do this all through the winter, and you will face any weather with confidence.



CROOKES HALIBUT OIL

OBTAINABLE ONLY FROM CHEMISTS

C47

Printed in England by Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew & Co., Limited at 15-20, Phœnix Place, Mount Pleasant, W.C.I. and published by them weekly, with one additional summer issue and one additional winter issue, at 10, Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.—WEDNESDAY, December 29, 1948.